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DUNGEON

A Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game Supplement

Infernal Wrath

A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 4–6

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"Infernal Wrath" is a murder mystery wrapped inside a murder mystery. The people of Raske believe that a ghost is targeting citizens who are secret members of a violent vigilante group called the Red Angels. Can the adventurers discover who is in the group in time to prevent subsequent deaths? Do the murderous Red Angels even deserve to be protected?

This D&D® adventure is designed for characters of levels 4–6. The town of Raske and its people can be easily placed into any campaign.

Background

The town of Raske thrives on trade, but its residents remain insular. They allow travelers to use their docks, stay at the inn, and trade at their shops, but they're suspicious of anyone who stays more than a couple of days. Newcomers learn quickly to assimilate or be shunned.

About a year ago, this resistance to outsiders became more violent. A group called the Red Angels began harassing—and later attacking—strangers who caused trouble in Raske. Members of the group keep

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their identities secret by wearing feathered red cloaks and hooded masks. The group's most recent attack was directed against a sharp-dressed tiefling thief named Chath, who had been picking pockets and cheating townspeople. He was beaten to death, then set afire, his burning body left in the street.

Now, months after his death, Chath has apparently returned from the grave for revenge. Jemos, the captain of the town guard, was brutally murdered a few nights ago, a red cloak left as evidence of his membership in the Red Angels. Witnesses saw the tiefling appear from nowhere in a cloud of smoke, then disappear in a gout of flame. Now the townsfolk think that Chath's ghost is on the loose and hell-bent on deadly revenge.

The truth is far more complicated. "Chath" wasn't just one person, but rather the twin brothers Zaedros and Vellus Stoygard. The two shared the Chath name as they committed petty crimes throughout the realm, staying far apart to confuse the authorities. Never remaining in one place too long, they maintained contact with each other by sending coded messages through couriers, caravans, and the occasional Sending ritual.

When Vellus lost touch with his brother, he began to search for him and eventually learned that Zaedros had been murdered. Though he vowed revenge on the Red Angels, he recognized the risk involved in taking the group on. Vellus therefore took advantage of a family heirloom to summon a patron—a succubus named Askavan.

With a pact signed in blood, Vellus gambled his soul. The devil provided Vellus with the identities of his brother's killers and granted him magical powers to aid his vengeance. But she also gave Vellus a deadline: He has to kill all the Red Angels before the sun rises after the next full moon. If he succeeds, his brother will be raised and returned to him, alive and well. If not, his and his brother's souls are forfeit.

As part of the pact, Vellus gained infernal powers of invisibility and teleportation, plus the ability to hurl flames and shroud himself in smoke. These abilities work only at night, a limitation imposed by Askavan. During the day, Vellus is caged inside the succubus's extraplanar lair.

Running the Adventure

This adventure is set up as a mystery on a deadline. The adventurers have only a limited amount of time to prepare for the tiefling's return. Characters choose how to use this time in the morning, afternoon, and night on any given day. How they spend their time and whether they piece the clues together determines their success in the adventure.

To successfully complete this adventure, the characters must learn the identities of the remaining Red Angels and protect them, or they must confront and thwart Vellus in his plans. An ambitious group might decide to do both. In the end, the characters might also clash with Askavan when she tries to claim Vellus's soul.

Adventure Hooks

You can plant the seeds for this adventure before it is under way, letting the events flow into the overall narrative of your campaign.

One of the Stoygard brothers might steal from the adventurers or make off with an item they were planning to acquire. Alternatively, the characters could hear stories about the town of Raske and the vigilante gang that preys on troublesome outsiders. An ally of the party might end up a target of the Red Angels, or could join the group. You might even consider replacing Captain Jemos as the first murder victim with someone the adventurers know.

If you prefer a more indirect approach, the adventurers might come to Raske for any number of reasons. The town is a trading hub, located alongside a major river and a prominent trade road. You can change the names of the river and road to suit your home game or chosen campaign setting.

The final murders take place in a short period as Vellus tries to meet his deadline. However, the time frame of the recent death of Jemos is dependent on how and when the adventurers arrive in Raske. If the time between the first murder and the adventurers' arrival is more than a day or two, add rumors in the "Structuring Play" section below, indicating that the ghost has been spotted in town over previous nights but has been unable to locate his intended targets.

Structuring Play

When the adventurers arrive, signs on the wall around the town warn that a murderous ghost lurks in Raske. The atmosphere is tense. People in the streets are talking, making it easy for the characters to learn what's going on.

- Recently, a ghost murdered the captain of the town guard, a human male named Jemos, and three other guards in the town's southern guardhouse. The captain was clearly the target.
- The ghost is a remnant of a tiefling named Chath, who was a stranger in Raske, as well as a thief and confidence artist.
- Chath ran afoul of the Red Angels, a group of mysterious vigilantes. The Red Angels conceal their identities and are dedicated to protecting Raske from criminals and troublemakers. Chath was killed by the group for his petty crimes—and as a warning to others.
- The belief that Chath is a ghost centers around the supernatural abilities he displayed during the attack. Though the well-dressed thief appears as he once did, he demonstrated powers he did not

possess in life. Chath manifested from nowhere on the night of the attack, wreathed in foul smoke. He then disappeared in a burst of flame, only to reappear somewhere else before unleashing unholy fire against his foes. Physical barriers did not impede his supernatural mode of transport.

- A red cloak and mask were nailed to the wall at the scene of Jemos's murder, seemingly indicating that he was one of the Red Angels.
- The popular gossip is that the ghost will return until all the Red Angels are slain. That means at least four murders still to come.
- The townsfolk have turned to Tommik, an "expert" on the occult, who suggested that they guard themselves against ghosts. Some houses have special wards in place, and wealthier citizens have hired bodyguards.

RASKE DETAILS

Use the following details to show how the people of Raske have reacted to the murders and the suspected ghost. On Tommik's advice, most have tried to ward their houses against supernatural incursions.

- Most people stay indoors at night.
- Bodyguards accompany the wealthy.
- Symbols of deities, most often the Raven Queen, are displayed in windows.
- Protective sigils are crudely scrawled in chalk or paint on the doors of houses. These sigils have no real power, but some could channel power if used with a proper protective ritual.
- Effigies in makeshift red cloaks hang from tree branches to draw the ghost's attention.
- Lines of salt encircle some dwellings.
- People wear charms in the image of an evil eye.
- Shops have run out of protective herbs.
- Since Chath also murdered town guards, some people fear that the ghost is not just after the Red Angels but instead wants vengeance on all of Raske. If that's true, then nobody is safe.

Segments and Scenes

As play begins, break up each day into three segments—morning, afternoon, and night. Have the players tell you their plans for each morning, then carry out those scenes. After that, ask them what they're doing in the afternoon, and carry out those scenes. Use the description of the town and the secondary characters to aid you in these scenes.

Limit the action in each segment to one significant undertaking or several small ones. For example, going to the Raske estate to question the Raske family is a significant undertaking, as is sneaking into the temple in search of clues. Shopping for supplies might be a series of interactions at several shops, but the whole shopping trip takes up only one segment.

After the morning and afternoon segments, ask what the characters do at night. The "Nights of Murder" section describes Vellus's plans. If the adventurers are in the right place, they might battle Vellus. If they are in the wrong place, they miss the tiefling unless they're close to where he attacks. For example, if the characters are staking out the warehouses when Igam the fisher is attacked near the docks, they might be able to run there in time to intervene. Otherwise, the characters hear about Vellus's success after the attack.

After the night encounter, unless their plans dictate otherwise, the group has a chance to recuperate until the next morning.

Constructing Scenes

This adventure describes Raske in some detail, as well as various prominent secondary characters. The heroes can interact with the people around them and the environment—the adventure elements—as they see fit.

Each adventure element's description might include one or more bits of information to help or mislead the adventurers. Physical clues such as Zaedros's necklace are noted where they are found. Other information is detailed at the location where it can be uncovered or with the nonplayer characters who know it. Some clues must be inferred from an NPC's relationships with other NPCs, or through his or her behavior. Such clues are detailed in the most relevant possible place.

Use these details to construct scenes. For example, if the characters go to the guardhouse, they can look over the murder scene and question Captain Oku, the other guards, and possibly Tommik. The secondary NPCs should reveal rumors regarding other NPCs, such as the guards talking about Oku's past. To add color, you might also have new guards report for an extra shift. This interaction should point the adventurers to other possible avenues of investigation.

The characters might split up to cover more ground. Doing this creates more scenes in a given day, and thus more opportunities for them to learn information. However, each scene has fewer characters to notice details. If the characters split up, make sure that decision has consequences. A player whose character is not present in a scene should contribute to the scene only after the fact, when the characters convene to discuss what they've learned.

Quests

As the adventurers decide to pursue specific goals of investigation or aid to the town, assign major or minor quests as appropriate.

Major Quest: Stop the Ghost

6th-level Major Quest (250 XP/character)
Thwarting Vellus's murderous plots as the "ghost of Chath" requires anticipating his targets. The adventurers then need to defeat Vellus before he accomplishes his goals.

Minor Quest: Find a Red Angel

6th-level Minor Quest (50 XP/character)
The adventurers complete this quest by definitively identifying a member of the Red Angels before that person is murdered. (The characters can complete this quest once for each member.) This quest can be undertaken only until all the Red Angels have been identified or killed.

Minor Quest: Protect a Red Angel

6th-level Minor Quest (50 XP/character)
The adventurers gain this quest reward for each Red Angel who survives the adventure. If the characters' actions prevent all four remaining Red Angels from being killed, double the reward to 100 XP per character.

Treasure

This adventure includes no treasure. Characters should accumulate approximately half the experience points they need to gain a level during the adventure, so you can add half a level's worth of treasure. Such treasure can come in the form of rewards from grateful townsfolk and as loot in Askavan's lair.

Nights of Murder

Vellus has only four nights to murder the remaining Red Angels, up to and including the night of the full moon. As such, he has carefully plotted out his attacks.

First Night

Vellus thinks Igam is the most likely of the Red Angels to flee, and he targets her as soon as she is back in town. He's right to do so. Igam has only just returned to town after an extended fishing trip when the adventurers arrive. When she finds out that Jemos was killed, she prepares to leave Raske.

After nightfall, Igam makes her way to the docks to escape in her boat. Vellus attacks her en route, and she flees through the shacks to the docks. If otherwise unhindered, Vellus butchers her and kills two dockworkers and a guard who get in his way.

If he is successful in killing Igam, Vellus lashes her boat to the dock and places her body inside. He hangs her red cloak over the prow, along with her bearded mask. Dockworkers find her there in the morning.

Second Night

Vellus plans to kill Rukkevinta by burning down the Red Eye Inn. He teleports into the innkeeper's quarters and binds her, preventing her from escaping. He then blasts the building with hellfire in various locations and leaves her to burn alive.

If Vellus's plans unfold successfully, he returns to seize Rukkevinta's scorched corpse, wrapping it in her red cloak and leaving it in the street in front of the inn. Otherwise, the adventurers can find the cloak inside the burned structure.

Third Night

Determined to reassure influential citizens of Raske that they have nothing to fear, members of the Raske family hold a gathering for citizens of note and a select number of prominent merchants on the night before the full moon. Vellus hopes to double up on killing Cindra and Knute so he can accomplish his required task earlier than he needs to.

Because of the murders and because two major families are out of town on vacation, the Raskes don't expect a big turnout. Only a dozen visitors show up at Raske Manor, along with three town guards that Kador Raske used his influence to have stationed at the party.

Vellus teleports into the ballroom as people are dancing. Wanting to make Cindra suffer, he goes after her children and husband first, then attacks her father before finally targeting Cindra. He expects Knute to step in at some point, and plans to slay the bodyguard whenever that happens.

If the murders are accomplished successfully, Vellus leaves the bloodied bodies on the floor of the ballroom and escapes.

Adapting to Challenges

Vellus adapts if his plans are thwarted by the adventurers. For example, he still attacks even if the characters gather the Red Angels in one place for safety. He avoids a straight-up fight if the odds are obviously against him, instead using distraction and subterfuge, or a more covert strategy. Burning down the inn is an example of the sort of tactic he might employ if he can't get the drop on his enemies.

Be creative, but avoid foolish actions until Vellus is driven to desperation by the knowledge that death or failure will cost him his soul. If he is delayed or thwarted, he does everything he can to kill the remaining Red Angels before his deadline is up.

Vellus Stoygard **Level 6 Solo Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid, tiefling XP 1,250

HP 280; **Bloodied** 140 **Initiative** +12
AC 20, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18 **Perception** +8
Speed 6 Low-light vision
Resist 10 fire
Saving Throws +5; **Action Points** 2

Traits

☼ **Infernal Smoke** ✦ **Aura** 1
Squares within the aura are lightly obscured to creatures outside of the aura.

Combat Advantage
Vellus deals 2d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to him.

Standard Actions

⨺ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 8 damage.

⨻ **Hellfire Bolt** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + 5 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Double Attack ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Vellus makes two basic attacks.

✧ **Concussive Flames** (fire) ✦ **Encounter**
Requirement: Vellus must be bloodied.
Attack: Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst); +9 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 6 fire damage, and Vellus pushes the target up to 4 squares.
Miss: Half damage, and Vellus can push the target 1 square.

Move Actions

Ghost Fire (fire, illusion, teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** ⚃ ⚄ ⚅
Effect: Each creature adjacent to Vellus takes 5 fire damage, and Vellus becomes invisible until he hits or misses with an attack or until the end of his next turn. He then teleports up to 10 squares. He does not need line of sight to the destination square.
Sustain Standard: The invisibility persists until the end of Vellus's next turn or until he hits or misses with an attack.

Triggered Actions

Hell's Wrath ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy within 20 squares of Vellus hits him with an attack.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The triggering enemy gains vulnerable 5 to all damage until the end of Vellus's next turn, and Vellus makes a basic attack against the triggering enemy.

Askavan's Gift (psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: Vellus begins his turn subject to any harmful effect.
Effect (No Action): All harmful effects on Vellus end, and he takes 20 psychic damage.

Skills Bluff +11, Intimidate +11, Stealth +13, Thievery +13

Str 12 (+4)	**Dex** 20 (+8)	**Wis** 10 (+3)
Con 14 (+5)	**Int** 12 (+4)	**Cha** 16 (+6)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, 2 short swords, scorpion amulet

Roleplaying Vellus

Armed with diabolic power, Vellus wants only to avenge Zaedros and fulfill his infernal pact. Before he made the pact, Vellus was just like Zaedros—a wandering thief and rake, grabbing whatever riches he could when the chance presented itself. Grief has driven him to desperate measures, and he hopes now to succeed in his murderous quest and bring his brother back to life.

Vellus kills anyone who gets between him and his targets, and he does not concern himself with innocent bystanders. He might even slay such innocents to divert attention from his true targets or to serve as an example. His willingness to burn down the inn, patrons and all, to gain revenge on Rukkevinta is an example of his absolute amorality.

Amulet Anomaly: The necklace and amulet worn by the "ghost" doesn't match Chath's. In fact, the ghost's amulet appears to be a second half of Chath's. See location 6 for more information.

If Vellus sees his brother's necklace in the possession of the adventurers, he might try to take it. He would like to return it to Zaedros when his brother is revived, but he's unwilling to put himself in great danger to recapture the heirloom.

Dead Wrong: If the adventurers believe that a ghost is committing the murders, they might target Vellus with powers or magic that specifically affect undead. The living Vellus is, of course, immune to such effects.

Fiery Manifestations: Vellus is wreathed in smoke and fire, but "Chath" had no magic in life. He must be getting magical power from somewhere.

The Price of Vengeance: His brother's death has made Vellus distraught and filled him with bloodlust. Nothing short of the painful deaths of his sworn enemies can satisfy him or fulfill his infernal contract. In his mania, he might reveal details about his true self, yelling out clues such as, "You'll pay for what you did to Zaedros!"

RITUAL INVESTIGATION

As they investigate, the adventurers might employ ritual magic to glean insight from the victims of Vellus's crimes. However, publicly performing any ritual that allows a character to interact with the dead can cause the already wary townsfolk to actively shun the adventurers.

Last Sight Vision: The character performing the ritual sees a tiefling matching Chath's description appear out of nowhere and kill the victim with his short swords or hellfire bolts. Have the character make a DC 15 Perception check to notice the scorpion-tail amulet Vellus wears.

Speak with Dead: The corpses of the murdered Red Angels know only as much about the tiefling as they knew in life—very little. If asked about the identities of other Red Angels, the spirit resists. An adventurer must succeed on a DC 22 Diplomacy check to gain a single name, phrased as the answer to one question. If the Diplomacy check fails, the question is wasted. Multiple questions can be used to learn multiple names.

Fighting Vellus

When Vellus shows up, his goal is to kill anyone whose death fulfills his pact. His direct attacks will kill any one of the Red Angels in 3 rounds, with you narrating those attacks. If the adventurers get in his way, Vellus targets them, intending to make them examples of his wrath. Other NPCs who get in his way are treated as minions, each of whom is disposed of in a single round.

As long as he still has time remaining to fulfill his pact, Vellus retreats after he is bloodied. If he can, he returns later the same night after spending his single healing surge to regain 70 hit points. If he is bloodied a second time on the same night, he retreats until the following night. Each new night, Vellus has full normal hit points.

Raske

The town of Raske thrives on trade, sitting as it does between a northward bend of the River Kethering and a major east-west road. These two routes bring all kinds of goods through town, and the major families of Raske have grown rich off tariffs and warehousing.

People

Many townsfolk trace their lineage back to the first settlers of Raske, and they are suspicious of outsiders. Though they don't hold the extreme views of the Red Angels, they do support native Raske citizens over those from outside the town.

Traders and travelers seldom stay in Raske long. Those who do make the town a permanent home have to assimilate into Raske's culture, keeping to themselves any views that don't fit in. Raske's people worship Avandra, Erathis, and Pelor above other gods, and many outsiders have to conceal their worship of other deities or risk being shunned.

The Suspect Roster table summarizes the main secondary characters involved in the adventure and their usual locations. These are the characters whose actions and circumstances involve them with the Red Angels, and they should be the central figures in the adventurers' investigation. Use the roster to help decide which important citizens appear in a given scene or where they go if any character follows them. The description of each character can be used to help play out scenes.

SUSPECT ROSTER

Suspect	Locations
Cindra Raske	Raske estate or trade office, shops
Elenka	Temple
Emorin	Shops, Red Eye Inn
Igam	Docks, fisher shacks, Red Eye Inn
Kador Raske	Raske estate or trade office, temple
Knute	Usually with Cindra, sometimes Kador
Oku	Southern guardhouse, Red Eye Inn
Rukkevinta	Red Eye Inn
Tommik	His home, other homes being warded, guardhouses, Red Eye Inn, shops

Cindra Raske, Heir to the Raske Fortune

The only living child of Kador Raske, Cindra is a tall human female with a solid build. Her dark hair and ice-cold blue eyes give her a haughty demeanor, and she rarely smiles among those she considers her inferiors. She has a rich, high voice, which she disguises with a throaty accent in her Red Angel persona.

Information: In the aftermath of her mother's disgraceful past (see "Rumors"), Cindra began to notice crimes going unpunished in Raske and looked for a way to stop outsiders from causing trouble. She started the Red Angels and recruited others to her cause. As the most aggressive member of the group,

she pushes for using even harsher methods to deal with outsider threats to the town.

Daen Orso, Cindra's husband, is the heir to the second largest family in Raske. They have two children, Thom and Mia.

Roleplaying: Cindra believes deeply in tradition and propriety. She has an aloof, regal manner and doesn't like being questioned by impertinent people, particularly those without a place in Raske's society. This resistance extends to adventurers.

If she's revealed as a Red Angel, Cindra refuses to name the other members, especially if those interrogating her are lower on the social ladder. She holds it as a point of pride that she won't break down and turn against her comrades.

Rumors: Cindra's mother abandoned her family when Cindra was a teenager. The person her mother fell in love with was a rich trader from far to the west, and Cindra saw the shattering of her world as a crime that the law couldn't punish. A vocal advocate for the Red Angels, she describes the group as protecting the good people of Raske from lawless intruders.

Set to take over the mercantile might of her family when her father retires or dies, Cindra tries to serve as an example of how the elite of Raske should look and behave. She is always dressed well and carries herself regally, even if she is a little snooty.

Elenka, Procurator of Erathis

The elder priest in the Raske temple, Procurator Elenka believes in the doctrines of Erathis. An elderly human female with a sturdy build and a raspy voice, she dresses well and has a keen mind.

Information: To fulfill the doctrines of the goddess of civilization, Elenka believes she must maintain stability. Raske has traditions and family lines that date back to the founding of the town. Elenka wants to preserve that heritage. She believes that newcomers must assimilate into Raske the way she did, by adhering to its laws and social structure. By the same token, the priestess also believes that the Red Angels are violent lawbreakers.

Roleplaying: Elenka thinks before she speaks. Her views focus her conversation on topics that benefit the community. She believes the adventurers if they say the murderer isn't a ghost, imploring the characters to protect Raske against the real threat.

Rumors: One of the Red Angels is described as having a raspy voice like Elenka's. Her regular meetings with Kador Raske to discuss religious and community matters also arouse speculation. However, it seems unlikely that Elenka would take it upon herself to protect the town, since she was once an outsider.

Emorin the Tailor

Nearly seven feet tall, Emorin is rail-thin and highly formal in dress and bearing. He can't help but stand out in Raske.

Information: If he is questioned about Igam or Rukkevinta, Emorin acknowledges a friendship with the two despite not sharing their political views. He admits that when Igam and Rukkevinta are together, they often talk about how outsiders are a "bad element."

Roleplaying: Emorin is refined, but not snobbish. He likes to gossip, and it doesn't take much work to extract information from him. He believes the Red Angels are bad for his business, and that their cloaks are garish.

Rumors: Like one of the Red Angels, Emorin is very tall. He plays in a weekly game of Three-Dragon Ante with Rukkevinta and Igam. Cindra Raske frequently commissions expensive clothing from Emorin, and even the well-dressed thief Chath was known to be a paying customer.

Igam the Fisher

The lower-class dwarf who calls herself Igam seems most unlikely to be a member of the Red Angels. A stout female with red hair, a freckled face, and a pipe she constantly smokes or chews on, Igam looks the part of a simple, cheerful fisher.

Information: Igam doesn't own a business, have a position of power, or come from a respected family. However, her ancestors have been fishing the river since the earliest days of Raske's founding. In the morning, she spends her time fishing. Later in the day, she sells fresh fish between the shacks and the warehouses (see locations 7 and 8), as do many other fishers.

After seeing so many outsiders behaving in unsavory ways in the docks section of town—including fouling the river with their garbage and filth—Igam became fed up. Secretly, she also wanted a little excitement in her life. She joined the Red Angels after seeing them run off a group of halfling vagabonds that had been squatting in a warehouse and filching fish. After she correctly identified Knute as a member and approached him, he helped her join.

Igam's Red Angel mask includes a fake beard.

Roleplaying: Igam is cheerful but a bit too forthright. Although she's willing to take risks for what she believes in, she's superstitious and isn't brave enough to face the threat of Chath's ghost. Igam openly says that the Red Angels are righteous folk who take care of troublemakers. She would rather face pain or death than reveal their secrets.

Rumors: A few people in town have seen Igam and Knute talking from time to time, which seems strange given the difference in their social standing. Igam is openly contemptuous of unsavory characters who congregate around the docks, almost daring them to try to start trouble.

Kador Raske, Town Patriarch

The patriarch of the Raske family controls the largest share of trade in the town. His hair has gone white, and his memory's not as good as it used to be, but

Kador is not yet ready to retire and give Cindra control of the family business.

Information: Kador doesn't know that Cindra and Knute are members of the Red Angels. He doesn't think he has anything to worry about from the so-called ghost, so he goes about business as usual—including throwing a private party to show that fear is beneath him.

Roleplaying: Kador is affable as long as he's shown the respect he thinks he deserves as the patriarch of the greatest family in Raske. He doesn't demand deference, just courtesy. Because he once benefited from their actions when a half-orc cutpurse stole his money, Kador believes the Red Angels are folk heroes. He openly says so.

Rumors: As the most powerful resident of Raske, Kador is highly involved in the town guard and knew Captain Jemos well. He's also a deeply religious person who frequently visits the temple and has discussions with Procurator Elenka.

Fifteen years ago, when Cindra was still a teenager, Kador's wife ran off with a wealthy trader who frequently passed through Raske. The incident made Kador more distrustful of outsiders.

Knute, Bodyguard

A massive figure close to seven feet tall, Knute is a dour and silent human male with short blond hair and a clean-shaven face. He carries a longsword, a shield, and a longbow, and he wears scale armor.

Information: The Raske family bodyguard watches over Kador, as well as Cindra, her husband Daen Orso, and their two children, Thom and Mia. When one of the Raskes heads to town, Knute goes along for protection.

Knute was the first person Cindra asked to join the Red Angels. Even though he's not entirely sure the vigilante group is a good idea, he goes along to ensure Cindra's safety. He is sworn to keep her role in the Red Angels a secret, particularly from Kador Raske.

Roleplaying: Knute doesn't need to say anything to intimidate most people, so he keeps his mouth shut. If asked, he says the Red Angels aren't his concern unless they bother the Raske family. However, if he sees strong evidence that the adventurers can effectively meet Vellus's threat and protect the townsfolk, he might come forward. If he becomes worried about the safety of the other Red Angels, particularly Cindra, he tries to persuade the members of the group to reveal themselves and accept the adventurers' protection.

Rumors: Although Knute has never harmed any townsfolk, his appearance and reputation make people afraid of him.

Oku, Captain of the Guard

After Captain Jemos was murdered, his second-in-command was hastily promoted. Oku has brown skin and wears her black hair in a close-cropped style. Her chainmail and weapons are kept clean and in good repair.

Information: Oku heard that Jemos had unofficial dealings with many merchants and families in Raske. She knows that Cindra Raske met frequently with the former captain, supposedly to report threats and offenses made against the Raske family. In fact, Jemos frequently covered up petty crimes committed by the members of Raske's elder families, particularly when the wronged party was an outsider.

Roleplaying: Oku is harried from dealing with the panicked townsfolk, the loss of four guards, and a supernatural menace. She keeps her conversations short and to the point. When it comes to the Red Angels, she believes they flout the law and need to be brought to justice.

Rumors: Oku is an immigrant to Raske, and she was a victim of the Red Angels when she first arrived in town. She faced resistance when she joined the town guard and as she rose in rank. Townsfolk who support the Red Angels bristle at Oku's new rank and believe that she'll unduly favor outsiders in matters of the law. It is well known that Jemos didn't like Oku, but the late captain could find no fault with how she did her job.

Rukkevinta, Innkeeper

The halfling Rukkevinta runs the Red Eye Inn. Though her brown hair is graying, her sharp green eyes and athletic build show that she remains alert and fit. She spends her workday tending the inn's bar.

Information: Rukkevinta fell in with the Red Angels after a night when Igam had a little too much to drink and spilled the beans regarding the vigilante gang. Rukkevinta wanted in, and the others didn't take much convincing. Years of dealing with rowdy patrons have worn down her patience, and she keeps a close watch out for visitors who might cause trouble.

Roleplaying: Rukkevinta always seems to be in a bad mood. She has little patience, and she is quick to make her workers take care of problem customers. Usually tight-lipped regarding the Red Angels, she might be pushed to say that the town guard ought to take care of trouble, not letting the vigilantes' violence scare off valuable customers.

Rukkevinta denies her involvement with the Red Angels as long as she can, but if any other Red Angel is murdered, she starts to lose her nerve. She won't directly reveal her role in the group or the other Red Angels' identities, but she might point the adventurers toward specific locations they should investigate.

Rumors: Raske natives know that even though Rukkevinta doesn't say much, she listens to just about every conversation that takes place in the bar.

Tommik, Occult Expert

Raske's self-styled authority on paranormal phenomena, Tommik is a doddering old gnome with wild white hair and a scuffed clay pipe. His long leather coat is lined with pockets containing all kinds of substances meant to detect or trap evil spirits, plus

dubious scrolls regarding hauntings and magical summoning.

Information: Tommik has lived in Raske for twelve years, and so is considered to be a native despite his odd qualities. His interest in the occult has been merely a hobby until now. The people of Raske trust Tommik far more than they do the adventurers—at least until they see the characters in action.

Tommik is the first to hear of new developments, so he can be a good information source. All the townsfolk know the place where Chath's burning body was found (see location 6). However, Tommik observed the late Captain Jemos disposing of the dead tiefling, dumping the body downstream just outside of town. (The body is long gone if the adventurers have any thought of looking for it.) Tommik claims that since the apparition shows no signs of being wet, the ghost must not have risen from the river.

If asked about the iron cage in location 6, Tommik says it's meant to keep the spirit trapped in case it rises from the same location where Chath was killed. The adventurers can confirm that this tactic might work, but the cage would have to be cold iron (DC 15 Arcana or Religion), which it is not.

Roleplaying: Tommik is a well-meaning buffoon intended as comic relief. Profoundly certain of his knowledge of the supernatural and sincere in his intent to help his fellow citizens, he constantly suggests questionable ideas and makes strange decisions. His ghost-banishing techniques come largely from folk tales and other dubious sources, so his ideas have more value for calming the superstitious than for fighting the supernatural. He doesn't believe that the Red Angels are fair or just, but he also assumes the vigilantes know more than he does about wrongdoers.

Rumors: Tommik is a gnome, and one of the Red Angels is of small stature. The old gnome's apparent incompetence might just be a cover, helping him thwart rather than aid the investigation.

The Red Angels

Claiming that they act for the true residents of Raske, the Red Angels have a long history of enforcing vigilante justice against outsiders—including the dead thief, Chath.

Members

With the death of Jemos, the Red Angels now consist of Cindra, Igam, Knute, and Rukkevinta. No one outside the vigilante group knows the members' identities. When the Red Angels take action, they wear long red cloaks adorned with red feathers, along with red hoods to conceal their faces. They speak as little as possible and use hand signals to communicate with one another in combat. They have slipped up a few times, however, and the guards and townsfolk of Raske can reveal the following information.

- The group has five members, some male and some female. No one's sure of the exact numbers of each.
- One of the Red Angels is nearly seven feet tall.
- One of them is short and slight enough to be a gnome or a halfling.
- Another is a male dwarf. You can tell by the beard.
- One of the females speaks with a raspy voice.

Actions

The members of the Red Angels harass, threaten, and even kill anyone—particularly outsiders—who they suspect of engaging in activities that threaten the peace and livelihood of the town. The members of the group require only strong circumstantial evidence or a powerful hunch to back up their judgments. No concrete proof is necessary. Members of races that have bad reputations—tieflings, half-orcs, and sometimes halflings—are their likeliest targets.

The Red Angels' deeds are known to the public. Anyone who looks at the vigilantes' exploits closely can discern a pattern of racism and reactionary fervor. Their accomplishments speak for themselves.

- The Red Angels ran off a group of halfling wanderers who were squatting in a warehouse at the docks after losing all their cash gambling at the Red Eye Inn.
- They beat a half-orc traveler who both lifted Kador Raske's coin purse and started a fight at the inn.
- Two rival bandits who had chosen Raske's town square as the site for a duel were killed by the group.
- The Red Angels hanged a tiefling trader on suspicion of necromancy and other black magic, then drove his wife and two children out of town.
- When they caught a dwarf merchant who had cheated customers, the Red Angels branded him, confiscated his goods and money, and chased him from town.
- They ransacked the wagon of a family of settlers staying in town for a season, interrogating them on the suspicion that they were harboring fugitives. No evidence was found.
- After killing the tiefling thief Chath, the Red Angels burned his corpse in the street as a warning to others like him.

Locations

The adventurers' investigation is likely to take them to the following locations on the Raske map (page 10).

1. Red Eye Inn

This three-story establishment consists of a taproom on the first floor where the staff serves food and drink, plus two upper stories filled with guest rooms. Rukkevinta the innkeeper has her private quarters on the ground floor, and employees who live on the premises share a separate room.

An owlbear head is mounted over the bar, where barrels of fine ale from the dwarven Stonegouge Brewery are on tap. The place is clean and pleasant enough.

People: Rukkevinta (halfling proprietor), Okenn (half-elf steward), Dez and Gilda (human servers). Most of the inn's patrons come into town on the boats and caravans that pass through Raske, staying for a few days before shipping out again.

Setting: Locals receive better service than outsiders, and Rukkevinta is willing to make itinerants move to "make room for regulars."

Rumors: As one might expect, the Red Eye is a center of community gossip.

Chath's Stay: The townsfolk have the dead tiefling and his ghost on their minds. He is described as a "dapper thief," and was often observed at the tailor's shop.

Common Connection: If the characters succeed on a DC 22 Streetwise check, they are able to determine that all the Red Angel victims stayed or spent time regularly at the inn shortly before being attacked by the group. They can also find out this information by asking about the victims specifically.

Weekly Game: Everyone knows of the weekly Three-Dragon Ante game Rukkevinta, Igam, and Emorin play together.

Clue: Rukkevinta's red cloak and mask are hidden in the ceiling of her quarters if she is still alive.

2. Shops

Raske's shops import most of their supplies but acquire their lumber from the forests around the town. Business transactions in the town are primarily carried out by way of trade goods rather than by coin.

No shops selling magic or magic items can be found in Raske. Most such items pass through town bound for larger trading hubs where they can fetch a higher price. Basic adventuring goods can be purchased at the dry goods store.

People: Emorin (human tailor), Dremyl (human blacksmith), Jasper (human cooper), Trancya (half-elf grocer), Hobble (dwarf dry goods merchant).

Setting: Since the appearance of the ghost, the residents of Raske stock up on supplies by day so they don't have to leave their houses at night. Stands are piled high with seasonal vegetables at the grocer's, and the shelves at the dry goods store are well stocked with all manner of supplies. The only goods unavailable in town are "ghost-warding" items such as garlic, salt, and wolfsbane, for which shoppers constantly clamor.

Trancya closes early to get home before sundown, while Hobble tries to convince his customers that this ghost business is all hokum.

The scent of dye and perfume wafts from the tailor's shop. Fine fabrics hang around the windows, striking a contrast with the humble shops nearby. Emorin brags about his winnings from his weekly Three-Dragon Ante game with Rukkevinta and Igam.

Dremyl keeps to himself in his smithy, forging horseshoes and casting iron bars, which are transported by barge to larger settlements up and down the River Kethering and sold there. He has little time for any other work while the ghost is abroad.

3. Temple

This large temple is one of the sturdiest structures in Raske. Inside the stone edifice, blue floor tiles form the symbol of Erathis, tapestries show the founding of Raske, and candelabra are set with blue-flamed everburning candles. In addition to a shrine of Erathis (worshiped as the god of civilization), the temple also contains shrines to Avandra (worshiped as the god of trade) and Pelor (worshiped as a life-giving deity).

People: Procurator Elenka (human priest), Brother Leatro (human curate), Sister Isabel (human curate). Elenka and her curates allow outsiders to worship, but the clergy leave no strangers alone in the temple.

Setting: Brother Leatro ushers a merchant in and impatiently waits while he offers prayers. Procurator Elenka leads a group in praying that Captain Jemos's killer will be caught.

4. Guardhouses

These two guardhouses are built of logs and reinforced with masonry along the sides facing the road. Each features a parapet on the roof, a second-story barracks, and a small office and storage rooms on the ground floor. The storage rooms hold racks of weapons and armor, as well as supplies and confiscated goods. The southern guardhouse was the scene of Captain Jemos's murder. It also has two small jail cells on the bottom floor.

People: Oku (human captain), 1d6 + 1 town guards (humans, half-elves, and dwarves).

Setting: When the characters first arrive during daylight hours, Captain Oku is trying to reassure a group of frightened townsfolk just inside the gate, telling them that she and Tommik are working on stopping the ghost. Tommik might be here, painting ghost-warding sigils on the guards' leather armor.

Clues: Oku has no idea that Vellus is behind Jemos's murder. However, the guards have more information than they realize.

Chath Sightings: Before Chath's death, the town guards were stymied by the tiefling's ability to travel throughout the local area at great speed. It was almost as though he could be in two places at once.

Jemos's Legacy: Morale is low now that the guards realize Jemos was a Red Angel. Most believe that the captain must have thought the guards too soft on crime and too beholden to arbitrary rules. Some now whisper that those who enforce the law should be able to move against bad people, even if they haven't been accused of any crimes.

Murder Scene: The corpses have been removed, but the scene otherwise remains largely untouched. The floor and walls are still marred with blood and scorch marks, and the smell of burned hair and flesh is heavy on the air. A red cloak with feathers on it hangs on the wall nearby, the guards afraid to touch it for fear of incurring the ghost's wrath.

Mysterious Note: When Chath was murdered, the guards searched his room at the inn, finding a note asking the tiefling to meet someone named Elfren on the same night and near the place that he was killed. The name doesn't match any person the guards have heard of, and it reads as if the two were meeting for the first time. The guards can't find the note now, and they suspect that Jemos destroyed it.

5. Old City Wall

This crumbling stone wall formerly protected the city. Many parts have fallen down, and what still stands couldn't keep out an invading force.

6. Scene of the Crime

At the eastern end of town, a short distance north of the docks, is the site where Chath's burning body was found in the street. An iron cage has been erected over the spot.

People: During daylight, a few townsfolk go about their business.

Rumors: The locals can confirm that Chath's burning body was found here, though no one is

entirely sure whether the tiefling was killed on this spot or dragged already dead to the street from somewhere nearby. Chath's body was eventually removed by the town guard and later disposed of by Captain Jemos (a deed that only Tommik witnessed). No one paid much mind to the site until Tommik and Dremyl the blacksmith erected the iron cage over it.

Clues: Though Chath's burning body was left on the street by the Red Angels as a warning to other outsiders, he was not killed in the open. If the adventurers search the area around the street, they find signs of the fatal fight in the overgrown weeds between two houses a short distance away. Any thorough search of the weeds turns up the necklace and amulet worn by Zaedros. Made of silver and beginning to tarnish from its exposure to the elements, the amulet resembles the front half of a scorpion. Vellus wears the other half–the tail of the scorpion.

7. Warehouses

Caravans and merchant vessels store their goods in Raske, usually for a few weeks at a time. The wealthy families of Raske own the spacious warehouses where the goods are stored, with each warehouse bearing a family crest indicating ownership.

People: Selby (human night guard), warehouse workers (mostly humans, dwarves, and halflings).

Setting: A human merchant, fearing Chath's ghost, hustles to have his shipment loaded so he can leave before nightfall.

Rumors: Selby saw Knute take a shipment of red feathers from one of the Raske warehouses. Captain Jemos told Selby to keep quiet regarding the incident, but since Jemos's death, Selby has been having second thoughts.

8. Fisher Shacks

Poor fishers (including Igam) live in this rundown section of town, as do many of the dockworkers who support the river trade. Laborers newly arrived in Raske end up here if they find themselves unable to rent lodgings in the more respectable areas of town. They frequently squabble with the native fishers.

In the afternoons, a fish market opens in the area between the shacks and the warehouses. The appearance of the ghost has caused a downturn in activity at the market recently.

People: Igam (dwarf fisher), Eike (human oarmaker), Dagger (human orphan urchin).

Setting: Small boats are pulled onto the riverbank to serve as shelters, and the whole shacks location is pungent with the smell of fish.

Clues: Igam's red cloak and bearded mask can be found hidden in her modest dwelling if she is still alive.

9. Docks

The docks on the south side of Raske are normally brisk with activity as trade shipments come through on barges or small ships. Some vessels stop off in town only briefly and leave their goods on board. Other ships unload their wares into one of the warehouses near the docks, from which they are sent on by land caravans or larger ships heading out to sea to the west. Ships pay a hefty fee for docking and have the protection of the town guards.

People: Louvanna (human harbormaster), dockworkers (mostly humans, dwarves, and halflings).

Setting: The wooden docks are in fine condition. Posted instructions inform the crews of inbound ships how to sign in with each warehouse.

10. Ferry

A public ferry travels between the docks on the north and south shore of the River Kethering. People traveling to the forests or the Raske family estate can use the ferry at a cost of 1 sp per person.

People: Human ferry operators Holgath the Younger (early morning to afternoon), Holgath the Elder (afternoon to late evening).

Rumors: From the docks here, Holgath the Elder has seen Cindra Raske and Knute make use of the private Raske ferry (see location 11) at odd hours. He offhandedly supposes that Cindra is unfaithful to her husband Daen Orso, though he quickly adds that she seems too proper for that sort of thing, what with her mother leaving the way she did.

Talking to old Holgath might lead to more information regarding Cindra's history, which the ferry operator knows well.

11. Raske Family Estate

The sprawling Raske estate (see the map on the next page) houses the wealthiest, oldest family in the region. Its main house is modestly constructed but decorated with precious materials the family has traded for over the years. Tall glass windows–some set with amber and green glass, the colors of the family crest–allow ample light into the manor. Ornate lamps of the same colors light the exterior of the house at night. Inside the building are fine items and art objects from far-flung lands.

The estate has a private dock and ferry used to take family members to the trade office (location 12) or elsewhere in the town.

People: Kador Raske, Cindra Raske, Knute, Daen Orso, children Thom and Mia (all humans). The Raskes employ three human servants to look after the estate, plus Knute the bodyguard. Kador, a widower, lives in the master bedroom of the main house. His daughter, Cindra, and her husband, Daen Orso, live

with their children in the smaller, though equally well furnished, residence next to the main house.

Setting: If the adventurers visit the Raskes, they are treated to fine tea, high-quality meat and cheese, and evasive answers to any questions.

Rumors: An ancestor, Earl Raske, founded the town when the great road was still being cut through the forests. The family built the estate when it first became wealthy.

12. Raske Trade Office

Across the river from the Raske estate, this office deals with major merchants. The main office contains a large oak supervisor's desk, stacks of contracts, and long scrolls bearing trade rates and currency conversions. Beyond the office are meeting areas, records storage, and a small warehouse for rare goods.

Inside the warehouse stands a locked vault bearing the Raske seal (DC 25 Thievery check to unlock). Only Kador and Cindra have keys to the vault, and they keep their most valuable goods locked inside (see "Clues").

People: Sig (human supervisor), Dorma (human accountant). Kador Raske, Cindra Raske, and Knute visit occasionally.

Setting: The adventurers catch the tail end of a tense negotiation with a trading partner.

Clues: Cindra hides her and Knute's cloaks and masks inside the vault.

Other Estates

Three other wealthy families have estates outside town, though none are the equal of the Raske estate.

Orso Estate: The Orsos own a large manor house and a smaller cottage along the road to the east of Raske. Daen Orso, the family's heir, married Cindra Raske and now lives at the Raske estate. Only three Orsos still live at the Orso estate—Callindra (Daen's mother), her sister, Gwenmyr, and Gwenmyr's

husband Georg. The Orsos have two servants, plus a bodyguard hired since the appearance of the ghost.

Podriggan Estate: This small manor house stands along the river between the Orso estate and the Raske trade offices. The Podriggans have been the least of Raske's wealthy families for some time. Members of the Podriggan and Vesult families are away on a joint vacation they take every year. They've been gone since before Zaedros was killed, but their staff of three remains.

Vesult Estate: North of the great road, the Vesult estate is of fairly new construction. The Vesults were treated like trespassers when they brought their money and influence to the town two decades ago. Since then, they've cemented themselves as full members of the community. Since they're away on vacation with the Podriggans, only their butler remains.

Other Homes

The most senior workers from the docks and warehouses live in modest homes scattered throughout Raske, as do a smaller number of lumberjacks, crafters, and town guards. A few traveling merchants have houses in town but rarely spend much time here. Tommik's house stands close to the old wall, just south of the guardhouses.

Askavan

The succubus Askavan commands a small extraplanar lair that keeps her largely independent of the hierarchy of the Nine Hells. Working to increase her power in the world, she tempts mortals and chains them into her service.

The terms of Askavan's bargain with Vellus make it highly unlikely that the tiefling can accomplish his goal of killing all the Red Angels before dawn after the full moon. Askavan has no reason to intervene on the tiefling's behalf, showing up only to collect Vellus after he dies or runs out of time.

If Askavan appears to claim Vellus, read:
A smoky portal appears out of thin air, and an incredibly beautiful human female steps forth. She speaks with a voice that is deep and alluring.

"I claim Vellus Stoygard by the terms of our contract. I alone have the right to his soul and that of his departed brother. No one may challenge me on this. If you believe you have a grievance, address me in my chamber. But I warn you, my grasp of infernal law is flawless."

Askavan has used *change shape* to appear human.

Facing Askavan

Combat Encounter Level 6 (1,300 XP)

Askavan's power is built on tricking powerful characters into dangerous bargains. As such, her flowery challenge is designed to goad the adventurers into following her to her lair, where she believes she has the advantage.

Light: Pools of burning slime fill the area with bright light.

Monsters: Askavan (A), 2 tar devil guards (T), 1 imp (I).

When the characters enter Askavan's lair, read:
The portal opens up to a grotto of black stone. Steps lead down to a cavern floor set with pools of flaming, bubbling slime. Three large cages of black iron are set across from the portal—two elevated on ledges with stairs leading up to them, and another on the floor near one of the pools.

"Welcome to my home," says the human female. "Let's get down to business, shall we?"

Perception DC 15: *Lurking mostly submerged in one of the burning pools across from the portal is a pale-skinned devil with black horns curving over its head. Black tar seeps from its skin. Another similar creature watches from the adjacent pool.*

Perception DC 19: *A tiny, crimson-skinned humanoid with horns, bat wings, and a tail clings to a natural column rising above the burning pool nearest to the portal. It watches closely from its perch.*

At first, Askavan tries to negotiate with the characters, offering them power in the hope that they will enter into doomed bargains just as Vellus did. If she is unsuccessful, she calls her attendants and attacks. When she does, she drops her human disguise for her true infernal form. The succubus's allies start out hidden if no character has spotted them.

Askavan, Succubus (A) **Level 9 Elite Controller**
Medium immortal humanoid (devil, shapechanger) XP 800

HP 180; **Bloodied** 90 **Initiative** +8
AC 23, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 23 **Perception** +8
Speed 6, fly 6 Darkvision
Resist 10 fire
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

☼ **Infernal Luck** ✦ **Aura** 2
Enemies in the aura take a –4 penalty to saving throws.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Corrupting Touch** (fire, necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 fire and necrotic damage (save ends).
Effect: Askavan slides the target up to 2 squares.

⸸ **Charming Touch** (charm) ✦ **Recharge** when no creature is affected by this power
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. Will
Hit: The target cannot attack Askavan. The effect lasts until Askavan or one of her allies attacks the target or Askavan drops to 0 hit points. If the target is affected by *charming touch* at the end of the encounter, the effect lasts until Askavan fails to touch the target during a 24-hour period.

✧ **Seductive Words** (charm, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close burst 10 (one nondeafened creature in the burst); +12 vs. Will
Hit: The target chooses either to be dominated by Askavan until the end of Askavan's next turn or to take 2d10 + 10 psychic damage and fall prone.

Move Actions

Devilish Swiftness (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: Askavan teleports up to 5 squares and makes a melee attack.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Askavan alters her physical form to appear as a Medium humanoid until she uses *change shape* again or until she drops to 0 hit points. To assume a specific individual's form, Askavan must have seen that individual. Other creatures can attempt a DC 30 Insight check to discern that the form is a disguise.

Triggered Actions

Loyal Consort (charm) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: A melee or ranged attack targets Askavan while she is adjacent to a creature dominated by her or affected by her *charming touch.*
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The triggering attack instead targets the creature dominated by Askavan or affected by her *charming touch.*

Skills Bluff +15, Diplomacy +15, Insight +13
Str 11 (+4) **Dex** 18 (+8) **Wis** 19 (+8)
Con 10 (+4) **Int** 15 (+6) **Cha** 22 (+10)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Supernal

Tactics

The devils coordinate to bring down intruders one by one. Askavan moves around the battlefield, staying near anyone she has charmed or dominated to protect herself with *loyal consort*. When they emerge, the tar devils focus on preventing characters from approaching Askavan. The imp uses its *tail sting* to make enemies more susceptible to Askavan's charms.

Features of the Area

Burning Slime: The lower areas of the lair are filled with bubbling, flaming slime. A creature that enters the burning slime or starts its turn there takes 5 fire damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

Cages: Black iron cages hold Askavan's victims. One contains the burned body of Zaedros, and another holds Vellus if he is here. The third is empty.

Portal: The portal leads back to wherever Askavan appeared. It remains open for 1 minute, then closes. An adventurer in the lair can reopen the portal at its last location with a DC 12 Arcana check.

Rubble: Debris-filled squares are difficult terrain.

2 Tar Devil Guards (T) **Level 4 Soldier**
Medium immortal humanoid (devil) XP 175 each

HP 53; **Bloodied** 26 **Initiative** +7
AC 20, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15 **Perception** +7
Speed 6 Darkvision
Resist 10 fire; **Vulnerable** 5 acid

Traits

☼ **Hot Reek** (fire) ✦ **Aura** 1
Any enemy that starts its turn in the aura takes 2 fire damage and cannot shift during that turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Khopesh** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 7 damage.

↛ **Tar Net** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** if no creature is restrained by this power at the start of the devil guard's turn.
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +7 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d6 + 4 fire damage, and the target is restrained (save ends). The devil guard can pull the target up to 4 squares to a square adjacent to it.

Str 12 (+3) **Dex** 17 (+5) **Wis** 11 (+2)
Con 13 (+3) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+3)
Alignment evil **Languages** Supernal
Equipment khopesh, net

Imp (I) **Level 3 Lurker**
Small immortal humanoid (devil) XP 150

HP 40; **Bloodied** 20 **Initiative** +8
AC 17, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15 **Perception** +8
Speed 4, fly 6 Darkvision

Standard Actions

⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.

Vanish (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The imp becomes invisible until the end of its next turn or until it hits or misses with an attack.

⸸ **Tail Sting** (poison) ✦ **Recharge** when the imp uses *vanish*
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 poison damage and a –2 penalty to Will (save ends both).

Skills Arcana +9, Bluff +9, Stealth +9
Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 16 (+4) **Int** 16 (+4) **Cha** 16 (+4)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Supernal

Concluding the Adventure

If Vellus Stoygard manages to murder every member of the Red Angels before the time limit, Askavan honors the terms of the pact, releasing Zaedros's soul and returning the dead tiefling to life. Zaedros erupts from the ground on the spot where he died and begins to search for his brother, aware of the risk Vellus has taken to see him returned to life.

Askavan does not come to the tieflings' defense if either one is threatened. The devil knows she'll see the tiefling brothers again when their luck runs out.

If the characters defeat Vellus, Askavan claims the tieflings' souls as per their contract. Neither Stoygard brother is seen or heard of again. As long as their souls are imprisoned, attempts to raise either brother automatically fail.

If the adventurers slay Askavan and her cohorts, Zaedros (along with Vellus, if he has been killed) passes into death, free from the infernal bonds Askavan placed on him. If Vellus was alive when Askavan took him to her lair, the characters can free him if they like. What happens to him thereafter is in their hands. If given over to the authorities in Raske, Vellus is eventually hanged for his crimes.

If Askavan defeats the characters, she kills them only if she has to. Her preference is to offer each character continued life plus an infernal boon in return for serving her—whether now or at some future time. Part of the pact makes Askavan less vulnerable to her new servants' attacks unless the magic of the pact is broken.

Members of the Red Angels whose identities are exposed face no repercussions from the guards or citizens of Raske. Unless any of the characters want to press the matter, the townsfolk are all too ready to put the ghost incident behind them. The Red Angels organization dissolves, but whether their recent brush with death changes the surviving members is up to you.

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Unfriendly Skies

A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 21-23

By Doug Hyatt

Illustration by Claudio Pozas

Cartography by Mike Schley

Introduction

"Unfriendly Skies" takes place high above the ground as the adventurers travel in *thundercloud tower,* a magic vehicle that was a gift of the storm giant lord Krombaalt.

An offer draws the adventurers to an ancient field of floating crystalline earthmotes, where the party aids Krombaalt's agent to perform a ritual that will enhance the flying tower's magical properties. The ritual also frees an ancient menace, the djinn caliph Moravar. The characters must defeat this djinn and his allies while also dealing with a sudden betrayal.

Background

Ages ago, the djinn caliph Moravar ravaged many lands in his effort to build an empire. He fell at the Battle of Tarukk, where the wizard Ezrogel halted his bloody campaign. Ezrogel imprisoned Moravar and his trusted lieutenants in drifting crystalline earthmotes that came to be known as the Sea of Tarukk.

For centuries, Skylord Moravar has chipped away at the confines of his arcane prison. Finally, he opened a crack in the earthmote. By way of this opening, he has sent a message to one of his ancient allies, the sphinx Samaa, detailing his location and the nature of his predicament.

Unable to free the djinns on her own, Samaa has enlisted the unwitting aid of the wizard Emeth, an agent of the storm giant lord Krombaalt. The duped Emeth wants to perform a ritual using the characters' *thundercloud tower* as a focus for his wizardry. Emeth believes the ritual will unleash a lightning storm of great magnitude, which he can harness as a power source and present as a gift to his master. This story is only a fabrication created by Samaa to gain Emeth's aid. The ritual's true purpose is to release the djinns from their crystalline prisons.

Samaa intends to betray Emeth as soon as Skylord Moravar has been freed. If the adventurers fail to stop the ambitious djinn caliph, he and his allies will once more terrorize the world.

Synopsis

"Unfriendly Skies" is presented as a series of encounters featuring *thundercloud tower,* a reward obtained in "Hall of the Fire Giant King" (*Dungeon* 200). In the first of these encounters, the wizard Emeth and his advisor, the sphinx Samaa, approach the adventurers for permission to use the tower as the focus for a storm summoning ritual.

The next two encounters are combat encounters that take place in a field of crystalline earthmotes drifting high above the ground. In the first of these

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Thundercloud Tower Level 25 Rare

This fortified, three-story tower floats atop a semisolid thundercloud.

Wondrous Item 625,000 gp

Properties

- The tower is a flying vehicle (statistics appear at right) with a magical control circle inscribed on the roof.
- Up to six humanoids can be attuned to the tower through the control circle.
- The control circle can also be used as a teleportation circle.

Utility Power ✦ At-Will (Move Action)

Requirement: You must be attuned to the tower and in the control circle.

Effect: You pilot the tower.

Attack Power (Lightning, Thunder) **✦ Encounter** (Standard Action)

Requirement: You must be attuned to the tower and in the control circle.

Attack: Ranged 20 (one, two, or three creatures); +28 vs. Reflex

Hit: 4d10 + 8 lightning and thunder damage.

encounters, the adventurers must defeat the current guardians of the earthmotes: an ancient earthquake dragon, Kul'Gira, and her elemental allies.

In the second encounter, Emeth performs the ritual, freeing Skylord Moravar. The characters must then defeat a group of djinns as well as the traitorous sphinx.

Involving the Characters

The adventurers must have *thundercloud tower* to complete this adventure. If the characters have not previously acquired this vehicle from "Hall of the Fire Giant King," you can provide the tower as a reward in your campaign prior to beginning this adventure.

Alternatively, you can begin the adventure by having Emeth arrive piloting the tower and offering to hire the adventurers as bodyguards. In this case,

Thundercloud Tower
Gargantuan vehicle

HP 625 **Space** 9 squares by 9 squares
AC 37, **Fortitude** 37, **Reflex** 5, **Will** – **Cost** 625,000 gp
Immune all conditions, cold, disease, forced movement, necrotic, ongoing damage, poison, psychic, radiant;
Resist 15 all
Speed 0, fly 8 (hover)

Pilot

The pilot must stand in the control circle on the tower roof.

Landing

The tower can land in any space large enough to contain it (its two-dimensional space plus 50 feet of overhead clearance). While the tower is on the ground, the thundercloud beneath it vanishes and the tower loses its attack power.

Load

Ten Medium creatures; fifteen tons of cargo.

Out of Control

Without its pilot, the tower hovers in place and does not move.

Magical Damage

Each point of damage the tower takes reduces its value by 1,000 gp. Such damage can be repaired at a cost of 1,000 gp per hit point.

Treasure

This adventure includes no treasure other than improvements to *thundercloud tower*. You are free to assign additional treasure as you see fit. The dragon's treasure is in her lair, which is beyond the scope of this adventure. Skylord Moravar and his followers might have been imprisoned with jewelry or other portable wealth. In thanks, Emeth could offer his *airstriders* (*Adventurer's Vault*, page 125) to the group. Finally, a grateful Krombaalt could reward the characters for their continued allegiance.

the task is done, or you can provide another reward to entice the characters to aid the wizard.

If the characters refuse to aid Emeth, Samaa enlists other allies of Moravar to assault the tower and capture it. The attack should motivate the adventurers to find out who their attacker is. Samaa's plan is to make sure they turn to Emeth for aid.

Event 1: Krombaalt's Envoy

Roleplaying Encounter

Emeth arrives at *thundercloud tower* and makes the adventurers an offer.

While the characters are in the tower, read:
Approaching through the clouds is a lone figure astride a silver sphinx, a staff raised above its head. With a loud boom, a sigil of arcane lightning appears in the sky—the thunderhawk symbol of Krombaalt, the storm giant lord.

Despite the figure's distance, a voice reverberates in the air around you. "Krombaalt sends his greetings, friends. Do I have your permission to land?"

Emeth and Samaa land atop the tower if allowed to do so. If the characters refuse, Emeth flies close enough for the characters to see him more clearly, and he asks what he can do to prove he is an ally.

When Emeth and Samaa land, read:
A balding, middle-aged human male in blue robes dismounts from the sphinx and bows before you. "Greetings. I am Emeth, agent of the storm giant lord Krombaalt, and this is my friend and advisor, Samaa." Emeth gestures to the sphinx, a horse-sized creature with the beautiful body of a winged silver lion and a head like a cross between a human female and a great cat. "We seek your assistance."

Emeth's Offer

After whatever other pleasantries the characters wish to engage in, Emeth shares his plans.

When Emeth is ready to explain, read:
"I intend to summon a mighty storm, using your tower as a focus for a complex ritual. The storm should provide a great source of arcane power, which I hope to give to Krombaalt."

Although the ritual won't summon the storm that Emeth expects, the wizard believes what Samaa has told him. Any Insight check confirms the "truth" of what he is saying.

Throughout this encounter, Samaa maintains the appearance that she is Emeth's steed and loyal advisor. She might contribute to the conversation in small ways, offering helpful advice. A character who observes Samaa closely might gain the impression that she is hiding something (DC 37 Insight check). If a character confronts Samaa with suspicions, Samaa acts insulted and informs Emeth that she will meet him at the earthmotes. She then flies away. In this case, she arrives again as combat begins in event 2.

Use the following as guidelines to direct the conversation between Emeth and the adventurers.

Why should we help you? *"The ritual will enhance your tower in beneficial ways."*

(This claim is true. Emeth doesn't know exactly what form the enhancements will take, but he is certain they will be substantial.)

Where do we have to go? *"A field of ancient crystalline earthmotes known as the Sea of Tarukk. The motes contain vast elemental power."*

Will it be dangerous? *"The ritual shouldn't be dangerous, although you'll need to take shelter when the storm is unleashed. As for the earthmotes, most creatures avoid them, since they can release unpredictable bursts of lightning. The one exception was Kul'Gira, but she must be long gone or dead."*

Kul'Gira? *"The ancient earthquake dragon Kul'Gira once made her home there, but no one has heard from her for many years. Surely she must be dead by now, or she might have moved on to another lair."*

How did you find us? *"Samaa has a talent for finding people and places she has never seen before."*

Why are you with a sphinx? *"Since I needed to find you, Samaa agreed to serve as my companion throughout this adventure. I hope you will do the same."*

If the adventurers accept Emeth's offer, proceed to event 2. He and Samaa leave if the characters refuse. In this case, consider the alternative hooks discussed in "Involving the Characters," above, such as having Samaa orchestrate attacks on the tower. Additionally, Krombaalt might send a personal plea, asking the characters to assist his agent and offering the party a greater reward.

Lore: A DC 27 History check reveals that the Sea of Tarukk is the shattered remains of an ancient battle fought between a djinn caliph's forces and a group of wizards sent to stop them. The resulting clash destroyed the entire realm of Tarukk, whose remnants now float through the skies infused with elemental and arcane power. Legend says that the wizards won the battle.

If the check result is 37 or higher, the character knows that the caliph was named Skylord Moravar and the leader of the wizards was named Ezrogel. None of the djinns were ever heard of or seen again after the battle. A character who succeeds on this check also knows that the dragon Kul'Gira is still alive and that she has not moved her lair from the Sea of Tarukk.

Emeth, Krombaalt's Agent **Level 22 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid, human

HP 110; **Bloodied** 55; **Healing Surges** 9 **Initiative** +12
AC 35, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 35 **Perception** +21
Speed 6

Traits

Airstrider
Emeth takes no damage from any fall and always lands on his feet.

Standard Actions

Staff (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +28 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 12 damage.

Thunderwave (thunder) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +26 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 18 thunder damage, and Emeth pushes the target up to 5 squares.

Protective Fog (zone) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Area burst 2 within 5; the burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of Emeth's next turn. Any enemy treats the zone as heavily obscured and difficult terrain.

Rapid Flight ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Ranged 10 (one creature). Until the end of Emeth's next turn, the target gains a fly speed equal to its speed + 2 and can hover.

Move Actions

Walk On Air ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Emeth flies up to his speed + 2, but he must end each turn on a solid surface or fall.

Triggered Actions

Float ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: Emeth falls.
Effect (Free Action): Emeth instead hovers in place until the end of his next turn or until he ends this effect as a free action.

Skills Arcana +23, History +23, Nature +21, Religion +23
Str 12 (+12) **Dex** 12 (+12) **Wis** 20 (+16)
Con 16 (+14) **Int** 24 (+18) **Cha** 12 (+12)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant, Primordial
Equipment robes, staff, thunderhawk symbol, *airstriders*

Samaa, the Silver Sphinx **Level 24 Brute (Leader)**
Large elemental humanoid (earth) XP 6,050

HP 270; **Bloodied** 135 **Initiative** +17
AC 36, **Fortitude** 37, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 35 **Perception** +24
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover) Darkvision

Traits

Sphinx's Foresight
Samaa and allies who can hear her gain a +6 power bonus to initiative checks.

Standard Actions

Claw ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +29 vs. AC
Hit: 4d10 + 18 damage, and the target falls prone.

Pounce ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Samaa flies up to her speed, then uses *claw* twice.

Minor Actions

Frightful Roar (fear) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Close burst 10 (enemies in the burst); +27 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dazed (save ends).

Samaa's Omen ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: Close burst 10 (allies in the burst who can hear Samaa). Until the end of its next turn, if the target hits an enemy granting combat advantage to the target, the hit is considered to be a critical hit.

Skills Arcana +26, Bluff +23, History +26, Insight +24
Str 22 (+18) **Dex** 20 (+17) **Wis** 25 (+19)
Con 20 (+17) **Int** 28 (+21) **Cha** 22 (+18)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Supernal

Emeth and Samaa

Emeth is a wizard in the service of the storm giant lord Krombaalt. More skilled as a researcher than a soldier, Emeth has focused his studies on spells to aid his allies in battle. He functions as a companion character (*Dungeon Master's Guide® 2*, page 27), so you can allow a player to choose his actions in battle.

Samaa served as an advisor to Skylord Moravar, a djinn caliph. Now she pretends to be Emeth's friend, luring him and the characters to the Sea of Tarukk to free her former ally. Most of her powers should remain secret until she turns on the characters.

Event 2: Sea of Tarukk

Combat Encounter Level 26 (45,250 XP)

The characters arrive at the supposedly deserted Sea of Tarukk, where they are quickly attacked by Kul'Gira and her elemental servants.

Light: Lightning dances from mote to mote, filling the encounter area with bright light.

Monsters: Ancient earthquake dragon (Kul'Gira), 2 rocktempest gargoyles, 10 shardstorm vortex whirlwinds.

When the characters arrive, read:
A field of jagged, floating earthmotes stretches out through the sky ahead. Crystalline shards jut out from the surface of each mote, coruscating with blue lightning. Wind swirls between the motes in all directions, filling the air with a sound like the shrieking of countless voices.

As you navigate through the sea of floating rock-and-crystal islands, Samaa turns, staring into the distance. There, an enormous winged dragon with rocky skin flies out from behind a huge earthmote. The dragon roars a command, and in response, swirling vortices of dust and lightning spring forth from other nearby motes. Two stone gargoyles emerge from cover to flank the dragon as it moves forward to attack.

Crosswinds: Updrafts and crosswinds blow between the jagged motes to partly hold up falling creatures. Whenever a creature falls, it falls no more than 25 feet per round until it has descended more than 200 feet. If it is still falling at that point, the creature falls normally to the ground 500 feet below.

Lightning Motes: The surface of each mote is covered with elementally resonant crystals. Any nonelemental creature that ends its turn on a mote's surface takes 20 lightning damage.

2 Rocktempest Gargoyles		**Level 23 Elite Lurker**
Large elemental humanoid (earth)		XP 10,200 each
HP 330; **Bloodied** 165		**Initiative** +23
AC 37, **Fortitude** 37, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 34		**Perception** +14
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover)		Darkvision
Immune petrification		
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
⊕ **Claw ✦ At-Will**		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +28 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage, and ongoing 15 damage (save ends).		
⸸ **Tempest Claws ✦ At-Will**		
Effect: The gargoyle uses *claw* two times. If both attacks hit the same target, the target is also dazed (save ends).		
Stone Form ✦ At-Will		
Effect: The gargoyle enters stone form until it ends the effect as a minor action. While in this form, it gains tremorsense 10 and resist 30 to all damage, gains 10 temporary hit points at the start of each of its turns, and cannot take actions except to end the effect. When the gargoyle ends the effect, it gains a +10 bonus to damage rolls made before the end of its next turn.		
⸸ **Flying Strike ✦ Recharge** when the gargoyle uses *stone form*		
Effect: The gargoyle flies up to 8 squares. At any point during its move, it makes the following attack three times, but only once against any creature. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +26 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 4d8 + 12 damage, and the gargoyle slides the target up to 3 squares.		
Str 26 (+19)	**Dex** 27 (+19)	**Wis** 17 (+14)
Con 24 (+18)	**Int** 15 (+13)	**Cha** 21 (+16)
Alignment chaotic evil	**Languages** Primordial	

Tactics: Samaa provides the characters and Emeth with her *sphinx's foresight* bonus to initiative. She then picks up Emeth, who takes to the skies to aid the party with his spells. By serving only as a mount in this encounter, Samaa hides her true combat capabilities. She uses none of her other powers to aid the party.

The whirlwinds move to catch every character in a *sandblast* aura. Kul'Gira attacks from just above

Ancient Earthquake Dragon **Level 24 Elite Soldier**
Huge elemental magical beast (dragon, earth) XP 12,100

HP 456; **Bloodied** 228 **Initiative** +22
AC 40, **Fortitude** 37, **Reflex** 37, **Will** 35 **Perception** +19
Speed 8 (earth walk), burrow 4, fly 6 (clumsy) Darkvision, tremorsense 10
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Quaking Earth ✦ Aura 1
When any enemy in the aura makes an attack that does not include the dragon as a target, that enemy falls prone and takes 15 damage.

Threatening Reach
The dragon can make opportunity attacks using *claw* against any enemy within 3 squares of it.

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +29 vs. AC
Hit: 4d8 + 14 damage.

Claw ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +31 vs. AC
Hit: 4d6 + 10 damage.

Double Attack ✦ At-Will
Effect: The dragon uses *bite* and *claw* or uses *claw* twice.

Earthen Maw ✦ Recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +29 vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d10 + 11 damage, and the target is restrained (save ends).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is instead petrified (save ends).

Minor Actions

Rising Tremors ✦ Recharge at the start of any turn when *quaking earth* is aura 1
Effect: The *quaking earth* expands to aura 3. At the start of the dragon's next turn, the *quaking earth* expands to aura 5. At the start of its following turn, the dragon makes the following attack.
Attack (No Action): Close burst 5 (enemies in the burst); +27 vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d8 + 14 damage, and the target falls prone and cannot stand up (save ends).
Effect: The *quaking earth* aura reverts to its original state and size (aura 1).

Triggered Actions

Sudden Quake ✦ At-Will
Trigger: The dragon is pulled, pushed, slid, or knocked prone.
Effect (Free Action): Each enemy in the dragon's aura falls prone.

Str 26 (+20) **Dex** 27 (+20) **Wis** 25 (+19)
Con 28 (+21) **Int** 24 (+19) **Cha** 22 (+18)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Draconic, Primordial

the tower, using her *quaking earth* and *rising tremors* to keep as many party members prone and focused on her as possible. The rocktempest gargoyles spread their damage among the characters, clinging to the sides of the tower or to earthmotes in *stone form*. They then use *flying strike* to tear through the adventurers, ending up next to a relatively weak melee combatant.

If reduced to 100 hit points or fewer, Kul'Gira retreats to her lair at the far edge of the sea of earthmotes. If she retreats or dies, the whirlwinds dissipate and her gargoyle allies flee.

Event 3: Skylord's Wrath

Combat Encounter Level 26 (46,800 XP)

As Emeth performs his ritual, Skylord Moravar and his fellow djinns emerge from their crystalline prisons. Samaa turns against the group, revealing her true allegiance as the djinns attack.

Light: Lightning dances from mote to mote, filling the encounter area with bright light.

Monsters: Skylord Moravar, Samaa, 2 djinn windbows, 3 djinn thunderers, 1 djinn stormsword.

10 Shardstorm **Level 23 Minion Skirmisher**
Vortex Whirlwinds
Medium elemental magical beast (air, earth) XP 1,275 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +21
AC 37, **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 34 **Perception** +17
Speed 0, fly 8 (hover)
Immune disease, poison

Traits

Sandblast ✦ Aura 1
While in the aura, any enemy takes a -2 penalty to all defenses.

Standard Actions

Abrasive Slam ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +26 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 15 damage.

Move Actions

Vortex Step ✦ At-Will
Effect: The whirlwind shifts up to 4 squares.

Str 12 (+12) **Dex** 27 (+19) **Wis** 22 (+17)
Con 24 (+18) **Int** 5 (+8) **Cha** 6 (+9)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Primordial

When the ritual begins, read:

As Emeth begins the ritual, the crystals nearest the tower begin to pulse with a bright white light. Over the next few minutes, the shrieking from the earthmotes rises to a nearly intolerable level, and the tower begins to vibrate beneath your feet. The pressure of the wind grows to match the noise—but then both suddenly end.

The jagged shards on the nearest earthmotes shatter, spraying fragments of crystal into the air. Before you can react, a half-dozen giant, blue-skinned humanoids emerge from those motes—djinns, armed and ready for battle.

Emeth slumps to the ground, exhausted. "I don't understand," he cries. "Where is the storm?"

Samaa cackles gleefully as she takes to the air. "Fools!" the sphinx says. "The ritual has released the storm I sought! Greetings, master!"

The mightiest-looking and most richly dressed djinn nods to Samaa, then turns his attention to you. "I claim this tower as the first spoils of my new empire. Relinquish it, and I shall leave you alive."

Skylord Moravar, Djinn Caliph — **Level 26 Elite Controller (Leader)**
Large elemental humanoid (air) — XP 18,000

HP 482; **Bloodied** 241 — **Initiative** +19
AC 40, **Fortitude** 37, **Reflex** 38, **Will** 39 — **Perception** +20
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover) — Blindsight 10
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 thunder
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Favorable Winds ✦ Aura 5
Allies in the aura do not provoke opportunity attacks with their ranged attacks. Moravar can slide any enemy that starts its turn in the aura up to 3 squares.

Standard Actions

Falchion (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +31 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 23 damage, or 6d10 + 43 damage if Moravar scores a critical hit, and the target is slowed (save ends).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is instead immobilized (save ends).

Wind Strike (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Moravar uses *falchion*, flies up to his speed, then uses *falchion* again.

Subjugating Shout (psychic, thunder) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +29 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d10 + 22 psychic and thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is also weakened (save ends both).

Minor Actions

Sandstorm Aura ✦ Encounter
Effect: Until the end of Moravar's next turn, Moravar and allies in his *favorable winds* aura gain partial concealment. Any enemy that ends its turn in the aura takes 15 damage.
Sustain Minor: The effect persists until the end of Moravar's next turn.

Skills Bluff +27, Diplomacy +27, Insight +25
Str 25 (+20) — **Dex** 23 (+19) — **Wis** 25 (+20)
Con 25 (+20) — **Int** 26 (+21) — **Cha** 29 (+22)
Alignment evil — **Languages** Common, Primordial
Equipment falchion

2 Djinn Windbows — **Level 22 Skirmisher**
Large elemental humanoid (air) — XP 4,150 each

HP 204; **Bloodied** 102 — **Initiative** +21
AC 36, **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 34, **Will** 33 — **Perception** +15
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover) — Blindsight 10
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 thunder

Standard Actions

Slash of Thunder (thunder) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +27 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 19 thunder damage.

Windbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10/20 (one creature); +27 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 19 damage.

Brutal Zephyr (thunder) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Ranged 30 (one creature); +25 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d12 + 19 thunder damage.
Miss: The windbow can make the attack a second time against a target within 10 squares of the first target. If the second attack hits or misses, the power ends.

Triggered Actions

Blowback (thunder) ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: An enemy scores a critical hit against the windbow.
Attack (Free Action): Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +25 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d10 + 18 thunder damage, and the windbow pushes the target up to 5 squares.
Effect: The windbow gains 1 action point.

Skills Bluff +23, Insight +20
Str 24 (+18) — **Dex** 27 (+19) — **Wis** 19 (+15)
Con 20 (+16) — **Int** 22 (+17) — **Cha** 24 (+18)
Alignment unaligned — **Languages** Common, Primordial
Equipment longbow, 20 arrows

If the adventurers surrender the tower, Moravar descends to the ground, forces the characters off, then soars off into the sky. Otherwise, the Skylord, Samaa, and the other djinns attack.

TOWER ALTERATIONS

When Emeth performs the ritual, *thundercloud tower* gains the following improvements.

- Speed improves to fly 10 (hover).
- The tower's attack power can be used up to twice per encounter.
- All defenses of the tower increase by 2.
- Any creature that is attuned to the tower's control circle and starts its turn there gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls with thunder powers and lightning powers during that turn.

Crosswinds: Updrafts and crosswinds blow between the jagged motes to partly hold up falling creatures. Whenever a creature falls, it falls no more than 25 feet per round until it has descended more than 200 feet. If it is still falling at that point, the creature falls normally to the ground 500 feet below.

Lightning Motes: The surface of each mote is covered with elementally resonant crystals. The ritual has caused more energy to be released from the lightning motes. Any nonelemental creature that ends its turn on a mote's surface now takes 30 lightning damage.

Tactics: Samaa's *sphinx's foresight* benefits her allies, the djinns, in this fight. She harasses the adventurers and Emeth with *pounce*, using *frightful roar* at every opportunity. Her aim is to make sure that Moravar survives.

Each djinn starts combat flying adjacent to or above an earthmote, with the thunderers farthest from the party. Any djinns that have forced movement abilities use those powers to cause characters to fall from the tower or the earthmotes.

The thunderers and the windbows stay at range to attack the adventurers, though they remain in Moravar's aura if they can. Moravar and the stormsword engage the characters in melee and protect their ranged allies. The Skylord uses *sandstorm aura* to shroud the top of the tower as he slides melee characters out of position for their attacks.

Skylord Moravar is too confident to retreat from mere mortals. His subjects, on the other hand, lose

3 Djinn Thunderers	Level 20 Artillery
Large elemental humanoid (air)	XP 2,800 each
HP 146; **Bloodied** 73	**Initiative** +16
AC 34, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 32	**Perception** +16
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover)	Blindsight 10
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 thunder	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Scepter** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +25 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 18 damage.	
✲ **Thunderburst** (thunder) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Area burst 2 within 20 (creatures in the burst); +25 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 1d10 + 16 thunder damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the thunderer's next turn.	
✲ **Imperious Thunder** (thunder) ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Area burst 2 within 20 (creatures in the burst); +25 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d10 + 5 thunder damage, and ongoing 15 thunder damage (save ends).	
Miss: Ongoing 15 thunder damage (save ends).	
Minor Actions	
Zephyr Step (teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅	
Effect: The thunderer teleports up to 20 squares.	
Triggered Actions	
↯ **Rage of Storms** (thunder) ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: An enemy scores a critical hit against the thunderer.	
Attack (Free Action): Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +23 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d10 + 14 thunder damage, and the thunderer pushes the target up to 5 squares.	
Effect: The thunderer gains 1 action point.	
Skills Insight +21	
Str 26 (+18) **Dex** 23 (+16) **Wis** 23 (+16)	
Con 20 (+15) **Int** 21 (+15) **Cha** 19 (+14)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Primordial	
Equipment scepter (mace)	

heart and flee if he is slain. Only Samaa stays to fight on, flying into a murderous rage and attempting to slay the character who landed the killing blow on Moravar.

Djinn Stormsword	Level 24 Soldier
Large elemental humanoid (air)	XP 6,050
HP 222; **Bloodied** 111	**Initiative** +21
AC 40, **Fortitude** 38, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 36	**Perception** +19
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover)	Blindsight 10
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 lightning, 15 thunder	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Scimitar** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +29 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 21 damage, or 6d10 + 41 damage if the stormsword scores a critical hit. Additionally, the stormsword marks the target until the end of the stormsword's next turn.	
✲ **Spinning Vortex** (cold, thunder) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +27 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4d12 + 18 cold and thunder damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
↯ **Whirlwind Dervish** (lightning, thunder) ✦ **Recharge** when an enemy scores a critical hit against the stormsword	
Attack: Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +29 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d8 + 18 lightning and thunder damage.	
Minor Actions	
✲ **Come to Me** ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +27 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The stormsword pulls the target up to 5 squares.	
Skills Bluff +22, Insight +24	
Str 28 (+21) **Dex** 25 (+19) **Wis** 25 (+19)	
Con 22 (+18) **Int** 19 (+16) **Cha** 20 (+17)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Primordial	
Equipment scimitar	

Conclusion

When the characters have defeated Moravar and Samaa, Emeth requests additional assistance in gathering samples from the crystalline earthmotes. Although the ritual didn't summon the storm as he expected, Emeth believes his master might appreciate having some pieces of the Sea of Tarukk to examine. The wizard also asks the adventurers for a ride back to the giant lord's hold.

As word spreads of the adventurers' deeds, the legend of *thundercloud tower* grows. Other powerful enemies might someday seek to claim the magic vessel for themselves. But that is a story for another day.

About the Author

Doug Hyatt is the author of several recent articles in *Dragon* and *Dungeon* magazines, and he is a computational biologist living in Tennessee. In his spare time, he enjoys chess, *Dominion*, and *Magic: The Gathering*®. You can follow him on Twitter as @doug_hyatt.

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Demonomicon of Iggwilv
Shemeshka the Marauder

By Brian R. James and Todd Stewart

Illustration by Tony Foti

Shemeshka the Marauder is as much a fixture of the extraplanar metropolis of Sigil as its portals, smog, and razorvine. The "King of the Cross-Trade" is something of a paragon of her kind, and she is curiously unique. She combines a raavasta's moral depravity with the golden veneer of a pampered and cultured noble—and she possesses all the arrogant pretension of both. Yet, a noble is unlikely to slay a peasant with a whisper and a twitch of her fingers, or to send the peasant's severed head home in a box with a bill for the cleaning of her bloodstained dress.

The Cage

Everything is a game to Shemeshka. She has been in the Cage longer than almost any other entity still alive there, and her position is secure enough that only the Lady of Pain could topple her easily. Perhaps excepting A'kin the Friendly Fiend—an enigma in his own right—she has no rivals but for the ones she creates, or those she allows to rise and fall again in cycles that might be centuries long. It amuses her. But if it's all just a grand game, what real and tangible goal has Shemeshka set her mind set upon? And is it in Sigil or not?

–The Demonomicon of Iggwilv

Sigil, known to planar explorers as the Cage or the City of Doors, is a mind-bending, fantastic place—a bustling and cosmopolitan planar city built on the inner rim of a giant torus. A neutral meeting ground of otherwise fractious powers, philosophies, and religions, Sigil paradoxically claims to be the center of the cosmos yet exists in no truly defined place. Its innumerable portals lead to all corners of the multiverse, yet gods and other equally powerful entities are barred from Sigil by the city's enigmatic ruler, the Lady of Pain. She keeps the peace and banishes troublemakers to perish in extradimensional mazes.

Shemeshka the Marauder is a fixture in the Cage. Buying and selling secrets and souls, she has a hand in virtually everything that happens in Sigil through her network of spies and informers. The Marauder surrounds herself with the trappings of wealth and luxury, but such pleasures mean little compared to her lust for secrets and her ability to use those secrets to control and manipulate those around her.

Shemeshka is utterly amoral, and she is a liar above all else. She views other creatures as her playthings. The reward for dealing with Shemeshka can be tremendous, but her bargains always come at great cost. In the end, the Marauder neither seeks control for its own sake, nor covets the destruction

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EXPLORE THE CITY OF DOORS

Sigil first appeared in the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Planescape® Campaign Setting* as the iconic center of the cosmology of the Dungeons & Dragons® game. Updated for both 3rd Edition and 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons, the City of Doors has been most recently explored in *Dungeon Master's Guide® 2*, which offers a dossier on the bustling planar metropolis and its enigmatic ruler, the Lady of Pain.

and carnage worshiped by other demons. Shemeshka wants a perfect world—one in which everyone and everything suffers.

A Fiendish Heritage

Shemeshka's public appearance is a duality of grace and mercurial sadism. Many no doubt believe that she hides the snarling fiend under a mask of social gentility, but that is far too obvious and simple for her. As such, I wonder if both countenances are equally false and undertaken for the sake of appearance, each timed for the best effect like a grand stage persona. What lurks behind both the regal elegance and the spoiled, bloodthirsty madness is something much colder, much more malicious, and far more calculating than Shemeshka and her already devious kind are normally given credit for.

–The Demonomicon of Iggwilv

The shapechanging raavastas are cerebral and amoral manipulators. Shemeshka the Marauder is little different, although to compare her to other raavastas would be like comparing a bonfire to a candle. Far removed from her kin, Shemeshka the Marauder is arguably the most powerful and influential figure in Sigil besides the Lady of Pain. The reach of her painted claws extends far beyond the Cage, and Shemeshka controls plots in her home in the Abyss's Blood Rift and across the planes.

As is true of all raavastas, Shemeshka's true form is that of a jackal- or fox-headed humanoid. Unlike many of her kin, however, the Marauder flaunts her natural form. No savage beast reeking of brimstone and blood, Shemeshka prides herself on her appearance. She coifs her hair in the latest fashion and lightly scents her furred flesh with perfume. She also wears a king's ransom in jewels about her neck, ears, and fingers. Contrasting her resplendent selection of gowns is a tangled circlet of living razorvine perched atop her head. Some say the circlet subtly mocks the Lady of Pain's bladed mane, even as this wicked crown reminds others of the Marauder's status as King of the Cross-Trade.

A gaggle of sycophants usually surrounds Shemeshka, and individuals within the group help clear her path, fill her goblet, keep away unwanted petitioners, brush her fur, and hold aloft the mirrors in which she constantly admires herself. Though they might appear to be simple toadies, Shemeshka's trim and well-dressed guards are all thieves, spies, and assassins of the highest training.

When Shemeshka appears in public, she looks and acts the perfect ideal of a noble of the highest caliber: refined, majestic, and regal. Those granted an audience find her interested in what they have to say, and most barely recognize her as a soulless fiend. Even so, Shemeshka is known for sudden fits, snarling rages, and sadistic piques that end in bloodshed. After her anger abates, attendants drag the offending presence away, and before long she is back to sipping wine or gazing into a mirror as she paints her lips, utterly uncaring of the blood she has spilled. Those that truly displease her end up vanishing, their private lives and public reputations destroyed, or their soulless corpses left out as warnings to others who would cross the Marauder.

SHEMESHKA IN COMBAT

If provoked into combat, Shemeshka prefers to attack from afar, employing a variety of charm and psychic attacks while her fiendish groom guardians swarm in for the kill. When advantageous, Shemeshka changes forms to employ her alternate powers and abilities. The Marauder takes particular delight in masquerading as her rival, A'kin the Friendly Fiend.

Shemeshka's full statistics are in *Demonomicon*, page 92.

A Lost Past

With the aid of secret operatives, powerful wishes, and other reality-altering magic, Shemeshka has erased all knowledge of her past prior to her first appearance in the Cage. Even the fanatically detail-obsessed scribes within the Tower of the Raavastas are at a loss to explain how the records of Shemeshka's past mysteriously vanished from their vaults—a fact they won't readily admit.

Shemeshka foments speculation regarding her past to add to her mystique. Some say that she originally was sent to Sigil as a handpicked representative of Phraxas, the ruler of the Blood Rift. When she was inside and isolated from her master and the politics of the Abyss, Shemeshka betrayed him, selling her services to the highest bidder and carving out power of her own.

Shemeshka is also rumored to be the unwanted and abandoned child of Larsdana Ap Neut, an ancient, ferociously powerful, and long-vanished raavasta sorcerer who designed and constructed the Tower of the Raavastas. Still other rumors paint an altogether prosaic picture of the fiend as nothing out of the ordinary for her kind, with little to differentiate her from legions of raavasta scribes, sorcerers,

and contract-binders. Rather than hiding some profound secret or crime, Shemeshka might have buried her past simply to soothe an ego that couldn't accept having once been less than she is now.

King of the Cross-Trade

Shemeshka directly oversees or indirectly influences hundreds of business ventures (most of them unlawful), operates scores of illegal markets throughout the Cage, and uses her various proxies to influence every major guild and political body in Sigil.

The Mutual Trade Association represents many of Sigil's businesses, and it was formed by Shemeshka, the reclusive storm giant entrepreneur Zadara, and a powerful oni mage known as Estavan. Since its formation, Shemeshka has become the organization's de facto leader. The Marauder also commands major influence within the Order of Master Clerks and Scribes (but faces competition from Jeremo the Natterer), the Runner and Escort Guild (run by Kylie the Tout), the Entertainer's Guild (run by a renegade succubus formerly of the Society of Sensation), and the nascent Adventurer's Guild (used to recruit the skilled—or the brave and ignorant—to work for her). The Council of Innkeepers, the Arcane Brotherhood, the Builder's Fellowship, the Mortuary Guild, and others are more divided in their loyalties.

KYLIE THE TOUT

This red-haired, charismatic young tiefling heads up the Runner's and Escort's Guild. Shemeshka protected her for decades from the previous guildmaster, Autochon, who owed the Marauder his life by way of circumstances she originally arranged. Upon Autochon's death, Shemeshka turned the guild over to Kylie. Many wonder why Shemeshka continually favors the mercurial tiefling rather than discarding her as she does every other pawn, to which some whisper that Kylie is nothing less than the raavasta's own daughter.

The Fortune's Wheel

One of Shemeshka's landmark businesses and favorite haunts is the Fortune's Wheel, a well-known Sigil tavern, inn, and gambling house. Located in the heart of the Lady's Ward, Fortune's Wheel is the city's premier social hot spot. The house is run by an underworld organization known as the Knights of the Cross-Trade, with Shemeshka ensconced as its leader.

Common Room

Every inch as opulent as a king's audience chamber, the Wheel's tavern common room is plush and spacious. Brisk yet attentive servers flit between finely crafted tables and chairs. A great vaulted ceiling looms overhead, adorned with colorful murals depicting storied events from Sigil's history.

The common room's signature feature is the enormous dragon's head that arches over the bar. Though it appears to be a carving at first glance, the dragon head turns to address newcomers in the Draconic tongue. Those familiar with the physiology of dragonkind recognize this creature as a shadow dragon.

Patrons who become overly boisterous are kindly asked to leave and never return. If that request goes unheeded, the perpetrator is shackled before the dragon's maw and either devoured by the dragon or enveloped by the wyrm's caustic breath attack. Such unpleasantness is thankfully rare, however, with the dragon preferring to regale patrons at the bar with tales of its adventures.

Games of Chance

The Wheel has several public chambers dedicated to games of chance. Here, the bloods (Sigil's professionals and experts) come to mingle with the elite for hands of cards, games of dice, and a spin at the gambling house's namesake wheel.

Crafted from the iron rim of an enormous wheel pulled from a marut war machine, the Fortune's Wheel is gilded and adorned with ivory nails carved of baphitaur horns. The wheel is mounted vertically and spun until a clicking strip of boiled leather brings it to a stop, indicating a square between two of the nails. Bets are placed and paid off on a wooden table set before the wheel. The odds are terrible, but some bubber (the down-and-out of the City of Doors) will always be desperate to try for the golden square and its 1,000-to-1 payout. Alternatively, some patrons place the minimum 10 gp bet for a try at the Mage's Prize—a random relic imbued with arcane power. The Mage's Prize is changed out every ten days.

FORTUNE'S WHEEL

d100	Color		Payout
1-79	Black		None
80-89	Red		1 to 1
90-96	Green		3 to 1
97-99	Silver		Mage's Prize
00	Roll a d10:		
	1-9	Green	3 to 1
	10	Gold	1,000 to 1

Shemeshka's Court

Shemeshka can observe the action around the Fortune's Wheel from the balcony of her public chamber on the gambling house's second floor. Here, the King of the Cross-Trade takes audience with those canny or naive enough to attract her attention. Shemeshka doesn't require sleep, and her illicit business dealings begin in the evening and carry on well into the early hours of the following day.

When Shemeshka desires solitude, she retires to her private chambers within the Azure Iris, the small inn nestled atop the Fortune's Wheel. The inn's rooms are magically warded, and the privacy and

security of its clientele are guaranteed. A tall standing mirror in Shemeshka's room speaks to the raavasta's great vanity, but it also serves as a portal to a private demiplane containing a small tower overlooking a perpetually smoldering, flame-ravaged forest. (This planar refuge is said to be one of the Lady of Pain's abandoned mazes, altered and mapped through centuries of complex rituals.)

Shemeshka also maintains portals leading to other private locations in Sigil and the Blood Rift. The former include an abandoned mansion within the Lady's Ward, a torture chamber buried in the Slags district of the Hive Ward, and the ruined demonic Temple of Darkness deep within Undersigil. The dream-reading artifact known as the Nightmare Shaft that once occupied the temple's halls likely now resides in another of Shemeshka's demesnes.

Power Brokers

Shemeshka's would-be rivals don't stay rivals for long. They dance to her choreographed designs to either become tools, allies of convenience, exiles from Sigil, or names in the dead book. Of course, nothing is ever traced back to her hand and its painted, poisoned claws. The Marauder acts through layers of proxies that rarely realize they follow her orders. That isn't to say that Shemeshka doesn't have enemies, but those who fall into that category typically rage at her from outside Sigil or are kept as close to her as possible.

–The Demonomicon of Iggwilv

Shemeshka's allies are often her greatest rivals, and she treats them like a skilled gambler treats her cards—always held close and carefully hidden. Some of her servants despise her even as they follow her lead, dancing toward destruction of their own making. Some are allies of convenience, while others follow their own enlightened self-interest. All know full well that the Marauder will eventually attempt to lay them low.

A'kin the Friendly Fiend

Perpetually smiling, courteous, and pleasant to be around, the raavasta proprietor of the eponymous Lower Ward magic shop the Friendly Fiend stands in stark contrast to Shemeshka. Chatty and possessing an eclectic and rare selection of objects for sale—including portal keys, magic items, and expensive bric-a-brac—A'kin takes pride in obtaining and selling a visitor's heart's desire at a fair price. Most such visitors can't shake the feeling that the raavasta merchant seems just a little too friendly—and too deft at pulling information from them. Rumors spin the notion that A'kin is in bed with Shemeshka—metaphorically and literally—but saying so publicly is liable to cause Shemeshka to take terrible revenge.

Much like Shemeshka, A'kin has been in Sigil as long as anyone can remember. To this day, none know if the two raavastas cooperate in some loose fashion or virulently hate each other. A'kin declines to speak ill of Shemeshka, though it is widely assumed that she was responsible for burning his shop down three times in the past century. Additionally, Shemeshka has attacked and even murdered creatures for simply mentioning A'kin's name in her presence.

Many believe that both raavastas are engaged in an elaborate act, since their business connects so often below the surface of a dozen otherwise disparate plots. A'kin certainly doesn't act evil, nor does he register as evil to magical detection (though all raavastas are said to be able to hide their true natures that way). Yet looking deeper, one can see that the merchant is hiding something. If anyone understands Shemeshka, it's the enigmatic and ever-smiling A'kin, whatever their relationship might be.

Appearance: A'kin might be any other sandy-brown raavasta, dressed in robes of speckled teal, gold, and black—except that he seems almost unnaturally happy. He always smiles, his golden eyes bright as he eagerly makes small talk while tending to his customers' concerns. A'kin appears to know—and know about—everyone in Sigil, and he can put people dangerously at ease despite the soft scent of brimstone and ash that lingers around him.

Archdegog Kaugothirn

Long before first setting up shop in Sigil, Shemeshka helped aid the rebellion that saw Phraxas deposed as Master of Khin-Oin, the great tower marking the entrance to the Abyss's Blood Rift. Now that the Lord of Misery and Despair has reclaimed his throne, Shemeshka is particularly keen to avoid attracting his attention (despite having had a role in returning him to power). Even as she does, though, she maintains an informant within Phraxas's own inner circle.

The Marauder's primary contact in Khin-Oin is the ultrodemon Kaugothirn, Archdegog of the Priory of Rot. Kaugothirn is bound to Shemeshka's service through a powerful geas of which the archdegog is wholly unaware. Shemeshka uses her influence over the ultrodemon sparingly so as to not arouse undue suspicion.

Shemeshka has designs to personally infiltrate a second sacred and impenetrable stronghold—the Tower of the Raavastas on the Plain of a Thousand Portals. To gain entry, she first needs to reacquire a talisman she stole from one of her underworld rivals—the *Torc of Bin A'kin*. More information on Shemeshka and her dealings with Archdegog Kaugothirn is in *Demonomicon*, page 88, which features a short delve for 20th-level adventurers.

Appearance: Like many ultrodemons, Kaugothirn is tall and emaciated, with a large conical skull and wisps of chartreuse vapor emanating from his vacant eye sockets. Beneath tattered and worm-eaten robes, his skin is brittle and sickly with jaundice. As with all the archdegogs of the Priory of Rot, Kaugothirn's skull is adorned with long curved horns resembling those of a ram.

Estavan the Merchant Lord

As the most prominent representative of the Planar Trade Consortium in Sigil, Estavan takes an interest in the city's largest commercial transactions. After arranging for the disappearance of Estavan's predecessor, Shemeshka secured the allegiance of the oni mage merchant lord, though he is no mere puppet.

Estavan keeps an office in the Clerk's Ward, though, from the outside, it doesn't appear to be a place where an oni mage could work comfortably. The stairs up to the second-floor office are narrow, and the door at the top of the stairs was designed for human-sized creatures. Inside the well-appointed office, however, the lavish furnishings are crafted to match the oni's large frame. The merchant lord is rarely seen outside his office, and he is never spotted on the streets of Sigil. Most suspect that a bronze door in his office serves as a portal to remote destinations throughout the cosmos.

Estavan can be ostentatious, manipulative, and merciless if it suits him, but he can also be a powerful friend and ally for characters who stay on his good side. He is meticulous and uncaring in his business dealings, snapping up or shuttering rival businesses by the dozen.

Through Estavan, Shemeshka hopes to one day bend the Planar Trade Consortium to her will. Unknown even to the Marauder, Estavan is secretly aligned with the Fraternity of Order—an organization of high-minded lawmakers who seek to extinguish chaos from the universe. As Shemeshka manipulates Estavan to further her own schemes, Estavan works subtly to steer the Marauder according to his own agenda. It remains to be seen whose machinations will win out in the end.

Appearance: Estavan, an eleven-foot-tall oni, is rarely seen by those who have no business with him. Those who do know him recognize the merchant lord by his red silk kimono and flashy gold necklace. His polished horns and ornate ivory tusks are carved with designs of unfathomable significance, and the ornate walking stick he carries is actually a magic polearm known as a naginata.

Ramander the Wise

A powerful human wizard and self-styled "Master of Portals," Ramander once located many choice portals in Sigil. After purchasing the land they stood on, he charged a nominal fee for the use of he portals—a thing forbidden by the Lady of Pain. Often seen as Shemeshka's apprentice, Ramander long enjoyed the Marauder's protection as the two engaged in a decade-long partnership, with Shemeshka providing advice and goading him closer to incurring the Lady's wrath.

Ramander vanished into thin air one night along with his manor in the Lady's Ward. His mazing came after hosting Shemeshka for the evening, at which time he expected an expansion of their business and personal relationship. With convenient prescience, the fiend left before the Lady of Pain consigned Ramander to his fate—and she had Ramander's logbook of portal locations and keys in hand. The deeds to his holdings were transferred to Shemeshka's name upon his presumed death.

Ramander still lives, however, trapped in his personal maze, powerless and cognizant of the Marauder's betrayal. Having discovered a portal into his prison, Shemeshka occasionally sends mocking love letters to torment him further. For his part, Ramander perpetually seeks the exit, and he has recently discovered a way to send messages out—either seeking to arrange his revenge or asking for help to make his escape.

Appearance: A human of average height and build, Ramander stands out only by virtue of the ostentatious number of magic rings, amulets, and *Ioun stones* on his person, and by the bejeweled magic staff he carries. Age and imprisonment have taken their toll on his once-handsome appearance. His long black hair and close-cropped beard show streaks of silver, and a perpetual scowl marks his features. His piercing blue eyes betray a still-fierce intellect and a keen desire to one day exact his revenge on Shemeshka.

Satugla the Grand Assessor

With the Blood War between devils and demons in a state of uneasy truce, Shemeshka's raavasta kin have transformed the Blood Rift. That vast canyon cutting through the infinite layers of the Abyss has become a vital artery of demonic commerce. Carved into the walls of the Blood Rift at the base of Khin-Oin is the beating heart of abyssal trade—a boomtown of avarice and debauchery known as Morglon-Daar.

Shemeshka has made inroads with several of the lords that govern this abyssal cesspool, but she prefers to entreat with the Grand Assessor whenever possible. As Blightlord of the Spray (one of Morglon-Daar's five regions), Satugla is aware of nearly every creature and vessel that passes in and out of the city. His extensive network of spies and informants makes the Grand Assessor a valuable asset for Shemeshka and her schemes.

At the Marauder's behest, Satugla's agents have begun smuggling lesser yugoloths out of Morglon-Daar to a remote corner of the Blood Rift. There, the demons are conscripted into the service of Bavamach, Archgeneral of the Blood Rift. A legendary commander grown frustrated by the peace of the Blood War, Bavamach is said to have designs on an assault on Khin-Oin meant to depose Phraxas.

Appearance: Shemeshka rarely lacks for physical companionship, but she finds Satugla's rakish charm and striking comeliness particularly irresistible. Like Shemeshka, Satugla is a well-groomed, jackal-headed raavasta with short, nearly pitch-black fur. His eyes are amber orbs, bright and without pupils. Scars crisscross his bare, muscular chest; the Grand Assessor covers his lower extremities with a sarong crafted of the finest silk.

Shylara the Manged

Shemeshka's history of apprentices, close business partners, and consorts reads like a dead book appendix of the especially powerful and naive. A fellow raavasta from the Blood Rift, Shylara served as both the Marauder's apprentice and public consort several centuries ago. As pompously vain as Shemeshka, Shylara was dismissed and cursed by the Marauder's sadistic jealousy awhile ago. Shylara's cursed flesh incessantly itches with a supernatural mange, thus granting Shemeshka's former paramour her title and nickname.

Since parting ways and losing her status as a favored student and consort, Shylara obsesses over the Marauder. Still infatuated with her former mistress, she doesn't so much seek revenge as a chance to prove herself worthy.

Shylara primarily dwells in the Tower of Incarnate Pain, on the boundary between the Blood Rift and the abyssal realm of Pazunia. She moves between there and other realms in the Abyss as her business compels her, but Sigil remains the overwhelming focus of her attention. Spurned, jealous, and unquestionably insane, Shylara sends agents into the City of Doors to push and probe at Shemeshka's plots. Shylara pays for rumors, desperate as she is to follow her former mentor's every move. She has a standing offer for the Marauder's head, to which Shemeshka retaliated with a similar offer for her former protege's. Shemeshka offered only half the bounty, a point not lost on the infuriated Shylara.

Appearance: Unlike the perfectly groomed and shining appearance of Shemeshka's coppery fur, Shylara's pelt is a bloody, mangy mess of weeping sores, bare patches, and self-inflicted wounds from her incessant scratching. Illusions largely hide her condition, and she dresses in exotic finery like her mentor as she overcompensates for her true appearance. Shylara's look often borders on the scandalously revealing. Her profound and delusional vanity fails to hide the constant smell of fresh blood that hangs about her like an acrid, cloying perfume.

Shylara's erratic, gilded madness dances in her luminous emerald eyes. She hates the Marauder even as she desires her, desperate to change her fate as Shemeshka's miserable, discarded creation.

About the Authors

Brian R. James lives in the Seattle area with his wife, four children, and house full of geek paraphernalia. His game design credits include *The Grand History of the Realms*™, *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead*™, *Demonomicon*™, *Monster Vault: Threats to the Nentir Vale*™, and *Menzoberranzan: City of Intrigue*™. Follow Brian online at twitter.com/brianrjames.

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Prey for Smiley Bob

By Christopher Perkins

Illustrations by Matt Dixon

Cartography by Mike Schley

"Prey for Smiley Bob" is a Dungeons & Dragons® adventure designed for 1st-level characters. The story takes place in Harkenwold, a barony in the Nentir Vale (see the *Dungeon Master's Kit*™ for more information). However, the adventure can be located in any area of a campaign world where halflings, goblins, and bears are found.

Background

Riverslye Homestead is a halfling commune (population 33) located near the White River in the Barony of Harkenwold. For years, the halflings have coexisted peacefully with a ferocious bear they call Smiley Bob. This neighborly accommodation came about after an encounter between Bob and a halfling adventurer named Reed Tinderfoot, who severely wounded the bear with his sword. The scar the bear earned in that fight stretches from the corner of its mouth to its ear, giving its face the semblance of a smile.

Until recently, Smiley Bob has avoided the halflings. Twice in the past week, however, the bear has

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sneaked onto the homestead, grabbed a halfling by the britches, and taken off with its prize.

Adventure Synopsis

The halflings of Riverslye Homestead hire the adventurers to deal with the bear in whatever manner they deem appropriate. The adventure assumes that the heroes agree to undertake this major quest.

Smiley Bob inhabits an old windmill some two miles from the homestead. Upon arriving at the windmill, the adventurers quickly learn what's really going on. A gang of Daggerburg goblins has recently moved into the area. By dressing up as halflings, the goblins have trained Smiley Bob to snatch halflings and bring them back to the windmill. A few goblins were sacrificed as part of the training process, but the results speak for themselves.

Ultimately, the adventurers must deal with the goblins and their devious leader, a goblin ranger named Tarpoo. Smiley Bob is another matter. The bear presents a deadly challenge for a 1st-level party, but the adventurers don't have to fight or kill the animal to complete their quest. In fact, if the characters are clever, they might convince Smiley Bob to join them.

Encounters

This adventure is divided into five encounters.

Encounter 1: Riverslye

Roleplaying Encounter

The adventure begins when the heroes arrive at Riverslye Homestead. They learn of the halflings' troublesome neighbor and receive a quest.

To start, read:

You've been killing time in Albridge, a village that stands along the King's Road where it crosses the White River in the barony of Harkenwold. The village elder, a hale and white-haired old halfling named Gerrad, has put out a call for adventurers. Two miles west of Albridge is a small halfling commune called Riverslye Homestead. In the past week, a bear has attacked the homestead twice, and the halflings have asked Gerrad to send help. Though he doesn't know how much coin the commune has to offer, Gerrad also promises free food and lodging for a month in Albridge if you agree to help the Riverslye halflings solve their bear problem.

If the heroes agree to help, read:

You follow the river west for two miles, to a point where its south bank rises into five grassy hillocks. The small hills have been hollowed out to form quaint little cottages, and the entire homestead is surrounded on the west, south, and east sides by a four-foot-high wall of neatly piled rocks. Several rafts and boats line the shore of the river to the north.

Families of halflings go about their chores in small groups. A few others stand watch behind the rock wall. As you arrive, the halflings stop what they're doing and approach. They seem eager to meet you.

The heroes can learn the following information by talking to the halflings of Riverslye Homestead.

- Twice in the past week, a bear known as Smiley Bob has attacked the homestead. On each occasion, the bear snatched a halfling and trundled off before it could be confronted. The first victim, a precocious halfling boy named Happy Shoals, was taken three days ago. The second victim, a female halfling named Punkin Rockhucker, was taken yesterday.
- Five years ago, a halfling adventurer named Reed Tinderfoot ran afoul of the bear and dealt it a grievous wound. Since that encounter, the bear has avoided all contact with halflings up until the recent attacks. Prior to the abductions, the Riverslye halflings had no issues with their ursine neighbor.
- The halflings call the bear Smiley Bob because of its scar, which stretches from one corner of the bear's mouth to its left ear. From a certain point of view, the grievous wound looks like a ghastly smile.
- Smiley Bob lives in an abandoned windmill two miles southwest of the homestead. The old windmill sits atop a grassy hill and isn't hard to find.

The halflings urge the adventurers to deal with Smiley Bob in whatever way seems most appropriate to them. Because they all share an affinity for nature, the people of the homestead are loath to suggest that the bear be killed, though they accept that this might be the only way to keep the commune safe.

The halfling families have pooled their money, and they offer to pay the adventurers a total of 100 gp for their help. This amount can be increased to 150 gp with a DC 13 Bluff check, Diplomacy check, or Intimidate check.

MAJOR QUEST: DEAL WITH SMILEY BOB

1st-level Major Quest (100 XP/character)

The characters complete this quest by ensuring that Smiley Bob no longer poses a threat to the halflings of Riverslye Homestead.

Encounter 2: Old Windmill

Combat Encounter Level 1 (150 XP)

The heroes' search for Smiley Bob leads to an old windmill and an encounter with goblins.

Light: Daylight.

Monsters: 6 goblin snipers.

When the party reaches the old windmill, read:
A slouching, dilapidated stone windmill rises atop a rocky crag ahead. Beneath its torn sails, a wood-framed doorway stands open. In front of the windmill lurk several small humanoid creatures with dirty yellow skin and pointy ears—goblins! They hurl rocks at each other as if playing some kind of crude game. So far, they haven't noticed you.

The adventurers can approach the windmill from any direction. The goblins are in two groups of three each. Both groups are south of the windmill and roughly 10 squares apart.

The goblins are currently without their leader, so rather than stick to their guard duties, they've divided into teams to play a game they call "hit your pals with rocks." The rocks they hurl at one another aren't thrown with enough force to deal damage.

Each round that passes before combat begins, make a single Perception check for the goblins, opposed by the adventurers' group Stealth check (see *Rules Compendium*™, page 128). If the goblins win the opposed check, they notice the adventurers and attack. Every time a goblin drops to 0 hit points, roll a d6. On a roll of 6, any remaining goblins scatter and flee down the hillside, never to be seen again.

The goblins speak Common. If one is captured, the characters can learn the following information.

- The goblins came from Daggerburg, a fortified town on the far side of the Harken Forest. (They're a long way from home.) Their leader, Tarpoo, is a goblin ranger. The goblins followed the White River to Harkenwold, where they stumbled upon the halfling homestead and the old windmill.
- Tarpoo had the idea to train the bear to kidnap halflings. For weeks, Tarpoo made his fellow goblins dress up as halflings and goaded the bear into chasing and capturing them. Several goblins were mauled to death in the process.
- The bear is sleeping inside the windmill, with three goblins watching him.
- The goblins ate the first halfling prisoner. The second prisoner is still alive in Tarpoo's quarters on the upper floor of the windmill.
- Tarpoo and several of his flunkies have gone fishing, but should be back shortly. When they return, Tarpoo plans to prepare his famous fish-'n'-halfling stew.

6 Goblin Snipers	**Level 1 Minion Artillery**
Small natural humanoid	XP 25 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +3
AC 13, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12	**Perception** +1
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Traits	
Sniper	
If the goblin misses with a ranged attack while hidden, it remains hidden.	
Standard Actions	
Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
Shortbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Goblin Tactics ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: The goblin is missed by a melee attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.	
Skills Stealth +8, Thievery +8	
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)	
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 8 (-1) **Cha** 8 (-1)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, shortbow, 20 arrows	

Encounter 3: Poke the Bear

Combat Encounter Level 1 (500 XP)

After they deal with the goblins outside the windmill, the adventurers can explore the building's interior. There they face Smiley Bob and the bear's goblin handlers.

Light: Dim light through the open doorway.

Monsters: 1 bear (Smiley Bob), 3 goblin cutthroats.

When the heroes can see inside the windmill but have not entered it, read:

The ground floor of the windmill is a musty, wide-open space littered with animal bones and droppings. The old millstone is apparently being used as a crude dining table, judging by the scattering of wooden bowls and leftovers. A dirty staircase leads to the upper floor. Sleeping soundly near the foot of the stairs is a monstrous bear with a nasty scar across its face. From the shadows, three goblins step forward armed with swords. Though they glare at you, they stand as though ready to awaken the bear!

The adventurers begin the encounter outside, with one or more of them near the open doorway. The bear lies at the foot of the stairs. One goblin stands on the stairs, while the other two occupy squares adjacent to the millstone.

These goblins hoped that the guards outside would dispatch the intruders. The last thing they want to do is wake the bear while Tarpoo isn't around to help control it. However, given the choice between fighting the adventurers or the bear, they prefer to take their chances with Smiley Bob.

To wake Smiley Bob, a goblin must gently poke the bear with a weapon as a standard action. (The goblins know that any stronger attack capable of damaging the bear will anger it to the point where it is uncontrollable.) When a goblin pokes the bear, roll a d6. On a roll of 6, the bear awakens.

Features of the Area

Millstone: The millstone is 2 feet off the ground. Climbing up onto it costs 1 additional square of movement.

Stairs: The staircase is difficult terrain to ascend.

3 Goblin Cutthroats	**Level 1 Skirmisher**
Small natural humanoid	XP 100 each
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15	**Initiative** +5
AC 15, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13	**Perception** +2
Speed 6	Low-light vision
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage, or 2d6 + 5 if the goblin has combat advantage against the target. In addition, the goblin can shift 1 square.	
➢ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d4 + 5 damage.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Deft Scurry ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The goblin shifts up to 3 squares.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Goblin Tactics ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: The goblin is missed by a melee attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.	
Skills Stealth +8, Thievery +8	
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+2)	
Con 14 (+2) **Int** 8 (-1) **Cha** 8 (-1)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin	
Equipment leather armor, light shield, short sword, 2 daggers	

Bear Attack

Smiley Bob doesn't really want to hurt anybody. A goblin or adventurer can trick the bear into attacking or not attacking a specific target. To cause the bear to attack or not attack a specific target, a creature must be within 5 squares of Smiley Bob and succeed on a DC 19 Bluff check, Diplomacy check, Intimidate check, or Nature check (a standard action). A character who first offers the equivalent of a day's rations to Smiley Bob (a minor action) gains a +4 bonus to this check. The goblins have no food to offer the bear.

If two successful skill checks result in Smiley Bob receiving conflicting instructions, the bear obeys the most recent successful check. For example, if a goblin persuades Smiley Bob to attack the party's wizard, and then someone in the party convinces the bear to attack one of the goblins, the bear follows the second command. If such conflicting orders cause Smiley Bob to attack no one on its turn (or if no one succeeds on a check to direct the bear's attack), it does nothing other than look threatening.

Bear	**Level 5 Brute**
Large natural beast	XP 200
HP 80; **Bloodied** 40	**Initiative** +3
AC 17, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16	**Perception** +3
Speed 8	
TRAITS	
Devour	
Any creature grabbed by the bear at the start of the bear's turn takes 1d8 + 5 damage.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Claw ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage.	
Bear Grab ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Effect: The bear uses *claw* twice against the same target. If either attack hits, the target falls prone, and the bear grabs the target (escape DC 15) if it has fewer than two creatures grabbed.	
Str 20 (+7) **Dex** 13 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+3)	
Con 20 (+7 **Int** 2 (-2) **Cha** 12 (+3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

Befriending Smiley Bob

When the goblins have been dealt with, Smiley Bob just stands there and looks confused. (If the goblins failed to wake the bear during the fight, it rouses in response to the sound of the last goblin falling.) The characters can try to convince the bear to join their ranks. The party must succeed on four DC 15 skill checks before failing three checks, and must offer Smiley Bob a gift of food up front. (A dead goblin suffices.) The relevant skills are Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Nature; other skills might apply, at your discretion.

Each successful Intimidate check imposes a -2 penalty to subsequent checks, since Smiley Bob

responds poorly to threats. If the party fails and the bear is not bloodied, it refuses to join the characters and wanders off. If the party fails and the bear is bloodied, it attacks the adventurers and fights until slain.

If the characters attempt to befriend Smiley Bob, the party receives an additional 100 XP as a bonus reward, whether the effort is successful or not.

Encounter 4: Punkin Stew

Roleplaying Encounter

This short noncombat encounter takes place on the upper floor of the old windmill.

When the adventurers climb the stairs, read:
The stairs ascend to a dark and musty space that reeks of cooked fish. Slivers of sunlight seep through thin cracks in the walls, illuminating a thatch bed sized for a goblin and a small fire pit with a makeshift spit. Huddled in the southeast corner is a bound, gagged, and blindfolded halfling female. She begins to tremble at the sound of your approach.

The halfling is Punkin Rockhucker, and seeing her safely back to Riverslye Homestead is a minor quest.

MINOR QUEST: RESCUE PUNKIN
1st-level Minor Quest (50 XP/character)

The characters complete this quest by freeing Punkin and escorting her safely back to Riverslye Homestead.

Despite being blindfolded, Punkin has kept her ears open since she was kidnapped. She knows Goblin and has overheard the following information.

- The goblin leader is named Tarpoo. He and several other goblins went fishing and could return at any time. Tarpoo says when he returns that he plans to make "fish-'n'-halfling stew."
- Tarpoo and his gang intend to stay until they've captured and eaten all the halflings at Riverslye Homestead.
- The goblins ate Happy Shoals, the other halfling prisoner. Happy was already dead and gone by the time Punkin showed up.
- Tarpoo keeps a box hidden under a pile of clothes and wigs in one corner of the room. The box is easily retrieved and contains the goblins' shared treasure (see below). The clothes and wigs are poorly crafted disguises to make goblins look like halflings. The goblins used the disguises to train Smiley Bob to attack halflings.

Punkin is terrified of goblins and isn't very effective in combat. Use the statistics for the goblin sniper to represent her if necessary, but she has 18 hit points. She can attack only if she is provided with a weapon.

Treasure: Amid Tarpoo's otherwise worthless belongings is an unlocked wooden box containing 300 sp and an amethyst (100 gp).

Encounter 5: Fish in a Barrel

Combat Encounter Level 1 (575 XP)

This encounter assumes that the adventurers stick around the old windmill until Tarpoo and his goblin flunkies return from their fishing trip. If the characters decide to go hunting for the goblins down by the river, create a new map and adapt the encounter as necessary.

Before the encounter begins, the adventurers have time to take a short rest and prepare an ambush.

Light: Daylight.

Monsters: 1 goblin ranger (Tarpoo), 4 goblin cutthroats.

When you're ready to begin the encounter, read:
A gang of five goblins approaches the windmill from the north. All wear piecemeal leather armor and are laughing and cavorting as they walk. Two goblins are carrying a small barrel, while two others carry fishing poles made from spears. A fifth carries a bow and has a quiver of arrows slung across his back.

The players can situate their characters anywhere they wish. The goblins come from the north, but you can spread them out as long as the two goblins carrying the barrel are adjacent to one another. The barrel contains half a dozen White River trout.

When the goblins reach the edge of the map, Tarpoo senses that something is amiss when the goblins left behind to guard the windmill cannot be seen. He stops in his tracks and boldly announces his return (in Goblin), expecting one of the goblin bear handlers to reply. If no response is forthcoming, Tarpoo orders the goblin cutthroats to advance while he stays in the back, takes cover behind the fish

Goblin Ranger	Level 4 Artillery
Small natural humanoid	XP 175
HP 44; **Bloodied** 22	**Initiative** +6
AC 18, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15	**Perception** +9
Speed 6 (forest walk)	Low-light vision
Traits	
Sly Dodger	
The goblin takes only half damage from attacks against which it has concealment or cover.	
Standard Actions	
Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.	
Shortbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 15 (one or two creatures); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 4 damage.	
Kill Shot (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** when the attack misses	
Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d8 + 4 damage, and the target falls prone.	
Triggered Actions	
Sly Goblin Tactics ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: The goblin is missed by a melee or ranged attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.	
Skills Nature +9, Stealth +11, Thievery +11	
Str 13 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+4)	
Con 14 (+4) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 13 (+3)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, shortbow, 20 arrows	

barrel (to gain the benefit of his *sly dodger* trait), and readies his shortbow.

Tarpoo fights until slain. When he drops to 0 hit points, any remaining goblins panic and flee.

Treasure: In addition to his armor and weapons, Tarpoo carries a level 2 common or uncommon magic item of your choice.

Smiley Bob's Revenge

If the adventurers convinced Smiley Bob to join their ranks, they can turn the bear against the goblins. As a minor action, a character can attempt a DC 15 Diplomacy check or Nature check to command the bear to attack a specific target (DC 12 if the party previously fed one or more goblins to the bear). With a successful check, on Smiley Bob's next turn, the bear follows the most recent command successfully given to it.

4 Goblin Cutthroats	Level 1 Skirmisher
Small natural humanoid	XP 100 each
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15	**Initiative** +5
AC 15, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13	**Perception** +2
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Standard Actions	
Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage, or 2d6 + 5 if the goblin has combat advantage against the target. In addition, the goblin can shift 1 square.	
Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d4 + 5 damage.	
Move Actions	
Deft Scurry ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The goblin shifts up to 3 squares.	
Triggered Actions	
Goblin Tactics ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: The goblin is missed by a melee attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.	
Skills Stealth +8, Thievery +8	
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+2)	
Con 14 (+2) **Int** 8 (-1) **Cha** 8 (-1)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin	
Equipment leather armor, light shield, short sword, 2 daggers	

Conclusion

When the adventurers reunite Punkin Rockhucker with her family and inform the halflings that their bear problem is solved, they gain any related rewards. With the goblins slain or driven off, Smiley Bob loses interest in the halflings and no longer poses a threat to Riverslye Homestead.

If the bear has joined the party, how long it remains with the group is up to you. At some point, you can decide that the time has come for Smiley Bob to move on. He is a bear, after all, and not much of an adventurer at heart.

On the other hand, if the party includes a druid or a ranger, Smiley Bob might form a special bond with that character and remain a steadfast companion. Likewise, you might consider making the bear a companion character (see *Dungeon Master's Guide® 2*).

About the Author

Chris Perkins is the D&D Senior Producer at Wizards of the Coast. He is also the creator of the Iomandra campaign setting, which inspires a weekly web column called *The Dungeon Master Experience*. "Prey for Smiley Bob" was inspired by Chris's teddy bear collection and is dedicated to Teddy, a stuffed bear given to Chris the day he was born.

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Court of Stars:
The Trinket Lord

By Karl Resch

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Where do lost things go?

Some say that such items vanish to a special place reserved for misplaced objects. Others insist that nothing is ever lost, only stolen. And still others believe they know exactly where lost things go, for they were once lost themselves.

The stories told by the formerly lost are as varied as the people themselves. Perhaps one explorer was trapped in the icy mountains, snow pelting her face with every step and blocking out the sun. Maybe a second trekked through an empty desert, endlessly charting a course to nowhere across a sand sea. A third might have wandered aimlessly through a dark forest. Wherever these lost individuals were, one thing was clear: They had no direction and no hope.

Although the tales of the lost unfold differently, all of them end the same way. At some point, a small brown fox appeared in the path of the wanderer. Each person chose to follow the fox as it bounded away out of the mountains, toward a small oasis, or to a place where the trees weren't so thick. Eventually, the traveler stood before a small ring of trees, and the fox leaped through the branches ahead. Pushing through the foliage, each wanderer encountered the same thing: a great heap of possessions—weapons, armor, statues, paintings, wagons, baubles, and much more. Atop the heap sat a gnome with reddish hair, examining a plaything he had plucked from the pile. He sat for a moment before smiling broadly and acknowledging the new arrival.

"What would *you* lose," he asked, "in order that what is lost become found?"

From Slave to Knave

The lore that surrounds the Trinket Lord is fragmentary, but one can assemble the pieces into a larger narrative that approximates the life history of this paradoxical archfey.

According to some tales, the gnome Tuxil was born into slavery in the fomorian kingdoms. Because the gnome didn't truly belong to the dark realm, he was always a misfit. Other stories say that Tuxil spent his youth with the creatures of the forest, rather than with his fellow gnomes, and that one day he was captured in the woods and sold into slavery. Regardless of which version is accepted, both make one point clearly: Tuxil's early years were unpleasant; he never knew where he was supposed to go or who he was supposed to be.

Many gnomes believe that the Trinket Lord was enslaved in the fomorian kingdom called Inbharann, the wealthiest of that race's subterranean realms. Every day of his captivity, Tuxil saw the river of cool, molten gold that ran through the kingdom, and he saw how the gold was used to purchase many great treasures for the fomorian overlord. Even though he lived among fantastic splendor, the gnome was allowed to own nothing but the hovel he inhabited.

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Lost, then Found

Eventually, Tuxil escaped with the other gnomes of Inbharann. The group made for the surface, and the newly freed gnomes settled in places of their choosing. But Tuxil had no place to call his own. He had known little but the cruelty of Inbharann, and life on the surface was strange for him. He became a wanderer, not knowing what he sought but hoping to find it. There were many places to dwell within the Feywild, but none seemed fitting to him. The eladrin cities were too regal for his tastes, the Murkendraw Swamp too dangerous.

Eventually, Tuxil wandered to a place where the trees grew thick and the paths were uncharted. Every turn he took seemed to bring him back to where he started. Panicked and confused, he ran, winding through the trees and shrubs until he came to a clearing. The gnome stopped to catch his breath for a moment and was awestruck by what he saw.

In the center of the glade was a pile of treasures both mundane and magical. As Tuxil walked closer to investigate, he heard a clatter as more items appeared atop the pile, causing some of the objects to roll down to his feet. The gnome didn't know what he had found, but he didn't care. At that moment, he realized that he enjoyed being lost—just as lost as was the small mountain of treasures before him. Those items belonged to the person who discovered them, and that person was Tuxil. Finders keepers, indeed.

As the gnome searched through the pile, he found items that he had never dreamed existed. His knowledge of magic grew as he studied the trinkets. Each day he spent in the glade, more and more objects appeared atop the hill of possessions. Tuxil began to move the items around, forming a hollowed-out structure. His old hovel in Inbharann had been small and dirty, fit only for a slave, but now he created a grand home of his own.

Quest for Treasure

As time went on, Tuxil realized that other things of value were waiting to be collected. The world held great secrets and treasures that were locked away, not possessed by anyone. His new home provided him with weapons and armor that amplified his magic, giving him the skills he needed to search for anything he desired.

At first, the gnome kept his endeavors small. He traded in the Murkroot and sought items that could be found in eladrin cities, adding them to his pile. Yet these mundane possessions were not enough. Tuxil wanted relics of legend—objects that had been lost for ages and that no others living today possessed.

He journeyed to the fallen city of Cendriane, where he visited ancient libraries to research the locations of forgotten fey treasures. He spoke with eladrin nobles about the other planes of existence and the treasures to be found in those realms. And he chased after them all.

Tuxil's cache grew ever larger, and he documented everything he owned and stored it in its proper place. His prowess in matters of thievery and magic far surpassed that of the rest of his race. Tuxil was no longer an escaped gnome slave, but a master of treasures. The Trinket Lord was born.

The Hovel of Hansels

Many adventurers refer to the Trinket Lord's dwelling as the Hovel of Hansels because discovering the location is considered a sign of good fortune. Tuxil refers to it simply as his home. The gnome often disguises himself as a fox to guide those who are lost to his demesne. He offers them a place to rest and, most important, the chance to trade with him. The prospect of acquiring new objects brings out his generous nature.

Thieves and treasure hunters with fey origins pay tribute to the Trinket Lord, hoping that he will favor them as they plunder ancient tombs and lost hordes. Skalds compose epic ballads of his generosity, and illusionists speak of his skill at trickery and mischief. "Going to meet the Trinket Lord" is a common expression indicating that the speaker plans to become wealthy.

Tuxil revels in all such tributes, and chooses individuals who demonstrate great potential to become his servants. To some people, he is merely a patron, one who rewards success and punishes failure. To others, he is a teacher, passing down parts of his arcane knowledge and item lore. To a lucky few, he is both.

Tuxil's mastery of his home is astounding. The gnome knows every item that makes up the hovel, its properties, and its precise location. It takes him only a moment to procure a requested item, and the Trinket Lord is quick to offer many enticing treasures when proposing a trade.

To visitors, the hovel is a mess. Statues, fabric, weapons, chamber pots, wagons, pottery, armor, cooking gear, alchemical items, books, artwork, rations, and other objects are everywhere, piled atop one another, reaching to the ceiling. Some have conjectured that lich phylacteries and forgotten rituals lie hidden among the heaps. Most items in the hovel are objects that have been separated from their owners—some of them misplaced, and others cast away on purpose. New ones appear every day.

Though parts of the hovel cave in and slide as the gnome searches for trinkets, the entire structure has never collapsed. The movement of some objects always reveals new items that had been buried. Despite the delicate appearance of some of the trinkets, none of them is ever broken or damaged by the minor landslides that occur. Visitors to the hovel are not as lucky and must take care not to be injured when parts of the structure shift and slide. When the Trinket Lord grants permission for a guest to search for an item, he

does so with a mischievous glint in his eye. He alone can run nimbly atop the piles, never faltering or falling, while others struggle to make their way.

Many archfey know the location of the hovel and visit it regularly, seeking items from the Trinket Lord and trading knowledge and rumors of other treasures. Tuxil is always cordial and polite, respecting his visitors' status while they respect his. However, some archfey scheme to steal certain trinkets, sending minions and lackeys (and sometimes adventurers) to infiltrate the hovel. Most of these attempts fail; the place is such a clattering, confusing mess that would-be thieves have a hard time finding anything or masking their presence from Tuxil.

Those who successfully steal from the hovel learn that its contents are protected by the Trinket Lord's curse. One by one, all the thief's other magical possessions lose their powers. Some denizens of the Feywild—including certain powerful hags—can break this curse, but always for a price. The simplest way to end the curse is to return the stolen item to the hovel.

Trading with the Trinket Lord

Tuxil is always after new items and eagerly trades with adventurers, but he is no fool. He becomes aggravated with those who make bad offers or seem to insult his knowledge of valuables. As a rule, the gnome will trade for items of equal or greater rarity. Although he has no problem trading an uncommon item for a visitor's rare item, he will never trade an uncommon item for a common one.

The most likely way for adventurers to meet the Trinket Lord is as a patron. Over the years, Tuxil has granted portions of his power to numerous fey pact warlocks in the hope that they will bring him new treasures from across the planes.

The Trinket Lord is not above other forms of bartering. For example, he might send a group of adventurers to another plane to retrieve an item that he cannot claim himself. The adventurers must negotiate their reward before they leave the hovel, because once the group departs, Tuxil considers the deal to be final (such are the ways of the fey).

Alternatively, the Trinket Lord will trade items for information. Various treasure hunters have sought him out to learn rumors about the last known locations of certain valuables. Just because Tuxil does not possess an item does not mean that he has no knowledge of it.

The gnome is known to be unhappy with some of the trades he has made in the past, and sometimes he hires a group to steal an item back from its current owner. When they return it to the hovel, Tuxil might offer to trade it to them—hoping to strike a better bargain this time.

Trinkets of the Hovel

Tuxil's home is a vast repository of wondrous objects (which means it can contain any sort of treasure you see fit). Two special items that the Trinket Lord created for his own purposes are described below.

Potion of Feyspeak

In his fox form, the Trinket Lord learns many secrets from the beasts of the Feywild. Applying his own knowledge of magic, he brews potions to allow others to speak with these creatures as well.

Potion of Feyspeak Level 3 Common

This golden liquid looks like honey, but the gift it gives is far sweeter.

Consumable: Potion 30 gp

Utility Power ✦ Consumable (Minor Action)

Effect: You drink the potion. For the next 5 minutes, you can speak with and be understood by any fey beast.

Amulet of Truth

In the Feywild, nothing is ever entirely as it seems. The Trinket Lord crafted these amulets after infiltrators began visiting his hovel to steal items for their patrons. Fey thieves favor the amulets, which allow their wearers to sense the presence of creatures and hidden areas.

Amulet of Truth Level 12+ Uncommon

Used in the Feywild to discover spies, the amulet reveals that all is not as it appears.

Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	Lvl 22	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 17	+4	65,000 gp	Lvl 27	+6	1,625,000 gp

Neck Slot

Enhancement Bonus: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Property

You gain an item bonus to Insight checks equal to the amulet's enhancement bonus.

Utility Power ✦ Daily (Minor Action)

Effect: Close burst 10. You know the location of one secret door or trapdoor in the burst, and you gain an item bonus to Thievery checks equal to the amulet's enhancement bonus until the end of the encounter.

Utility Power ✦ Daily (Minor Action)

Effect: Close burst 5. Until the end of your next turn, you can sense the presence of creatures in the burst that are subject to an illusion effect or a polymorph effect.

Other Treasures

The Trinket Lord's hovel contains many seemingly mundane items. The following table presents some unusual nonmagical items he might offer to adventurers. Each item has a 1 in 5 chance of instead being the

magic item presented to its right. You can describe the items however you wish, embellishing their descriptions to make the items seem more marvelous or downplaying them to make them seem ordinary.

FROM THE HOVEL'S HOARD

d20	Treasure	Magic Item
1	Chair with minotaur-horn headrest	Throne of dominion
2	Shadar-kai tattoo kit	Tattoo of vengeance
3	Dragonchess set	The immortal game
4	Necklace of dragon teeth	Pale tooth
5	Spinning wheel	Floating shield
6	Inkwell with hippogriff quill	Spymaster's quill
7	Crystal prism	Ioun stone of perfect language
8	Sundial from the City of Brass	Cinder of Gazra
9	Chunk of meteorite	Orb of enduring magic
10	Wooden ocarina	Tuathan road whistle
11	Bar of magnetic ore	Rod of smiting
12	Sharkskin flippers	Boots of swimming
13	Lightning rod	Daern's instant fortress
14	Ivory music box	Pixie music box
15	Hang glider	Greater flying carpet
16	Telescope	Lens of discernment
17	Rowboat with oars	Feather boat
18	Gardener's tools	Hill tamer crook
19	Vanity mirror	Spying mirror (one of a pair)
20	Hourglass	Sands of restored opportunity

Using the Trinket Lord

Being unaligned, Tuxil makes for interesting fey interactions in campaigns. His bartering nature gives DMs a way to weave adventures and rewards into any Feywild campaign, and he can introduce the player characters to a new world of powerful allies and enemies.

Of course, the Hovel of Hansels is a good location to use if a character is searching for a certain item.

The Trinket Lord **Level 22 Elite Lurker**
Small fey humanoid, gnome XP 8,300

HP 312; **Bloodied** 156 **Initiative** +19
AC 36, **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 34 **Perception** +20
Speed 7 Low-light vision
Saving Throws +2 (+5 against charm effects); **Action Points** 1

Traits

☼ **Nullifying Aura** ✦ **Aura** 5
Enemies in the aura cannot use magic item powers, other than powers of consumable items.

Indomitable Spirit
Any dominating or stunning effect on the Trinket Lord ends at the start of his turn.

Magic Item Mastery
Whenever the Trinket Lord attacks, choose two of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, psychic, thunder, or radiant. The damage dealt by the attack changes to the chosen types.

Standard Actions

⚔/☆ **Activate Magic Item** (varies) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 or Ranged 10 (one creature); +25 vs. Will
Hit: 6d6 + 9 damage.

⚔/☆ **Gnomish Tactics** ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The Trinket Lord must be invisible.
Effect: The Trinket Lord uses *activate magic item* twice.

✧ **Sunder Relic** (varies) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +25 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d10 + 9 damage, and ongoing 15 damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Minor Actions

Elusive Invisibility (illusion) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: The Trinket Lord becomes invisible until the end of his current turn or until he hits or misses with an attack.

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: The Trinket Lord alters his physical form to appear as a Tiny fox until he uses *change shape* again or until he drops to 0 hit points. While in this form, he takes no penalty to Stealth checks for moving up to his speed, and he gains a +10 power bonus to Stealth checks. He can make no attacks in this form.

Triggered Actions

✧ **Fey Resolve** ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The Trinket Lord is first bloodied.
Attack (Free Action): Sunder relic recharges, and the Trinket Lord uses it. He then becomes invisible until the end of his next turn or until he hits or misses with an attack.

Skills Arcana +24, Stealth +20, Thievery +20

Str 16 (+14)	**Dex** 19 (+15)	**Wis** 18 (+15)
Con 18 (+15)	**Int** 27 (+19)	**Cha** 24 (+18)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment bracers, helm, 5 wands, 2 rings

He or she can barter with the Trinket Lord or accept a quest to gain the desired object. Alternatively, as mentioned above, Tuxil seeks many treasures that are scattered across the planes, and he might hire adventurers to collect some of them for him. DMs can use the Trinket Lord to advance their plots in this way. For example, if you want your adventure to lead to a dragon's lair, Tuxil might recruit the player characters to obtain an item from the monster's hoard.

The adventurers can also be hired to guard an item that is being sent to the hovel as part of a trade. If the characters deliver the prize, they gain favor with the Trinket Lord, who will remember their service. Perhaps later the gnome will provide information they seek or introduce them to another prominent member of the Court of Stars.

When the Trinket Lord enters combat, the DM's creativity gets a chance to shine. Tuxil's powers revolve around the magic items he has available, and there is practically no limit to what might be found in the hovel. Perhaps the gnome begins a fight by wielding a fiery sword, switches to a gauntlet that ripples with lightning, and later picks up a wand that fills his foes with fear.

As an alternative reward, Tuxil might give the fey gift *scent of gold* to those who please him, especially the fey warlocks he instructs to find various treasures.

Enemies, Allies, and Minions

The Trinket Lord is a loner, preferring to stay in his hovel with his treasures. However, he is not without servants and allies, and he has made his share of enemies throughout the years.

Tuxil's Constructs

The Trinket Lord's collection of golems ranges from constructs made of mundane materials (such as stone and iron) to those made of rarer materials (such as obsidian), but you can refine the descriptions of the bodies. Perhaps the stone golem (from *Monster Vault*) is made of pieces from several statues, and the iron golem (from the *Dark Sun Creature Catalog*) is built of broken weapons that have been fused together. Think about how Tuxil would turn the hovel's trash into something useful. For example, a street golem could be reimagined as a construct of junk and trinkets, rising up amid the clutter.

Some guests of the Hovel of Hansels have seen golems made of torn scrolls and broken wands and vials. These constructs are scroll mummies (see *Monster Vault™: Threats of the Nentir Vale™*). Scholars know that the construction of a scroll mummy requires the essence of a lich. Did the Trinket Lord destroy one or more liches while retrieving their treasures and secrets? Only Tuxil knows for sure.

There is a limit to the kinds of golems found in the hovel. The Trinket Lord never uses flesh golems or any constructs made from body parts or dead creatures. His golems are created entirely from the objects and materials around him.

The most common allies of the Trinket Lord are the wandering animals of the Feywild. In his fox form, Tuxil can communicate with these creatures freely, and he has persuaded many beasts to remain close to his hovel in case he needs them to repel intruders. The largest and most dangerous of these creatures include displacer beasts and owlbears. In addition, various horrors from the Feywild lurk nearby in hopes of snatching easy prey.

Feygrove chokers also attempt to dwell around the demesne, but the Trinket Lord keeps them away so that would-be traders don't fear for their lives. Every now and then, Tuxil hires adventurers to eliminate the choker threats by finding their nests and destroying the monstrosities.

Golems

Within the hovel, it is not uncommon to see golems of various kinds wandering among the items or helping Tuxil sort his possessions. Many of these golems are made of broken items that end up in the hovel but have no real value. The constructs offer the Trinket Lord additional protection and are the first to respond if their master comes under attack. When guests arrive in search of a particular item, one of the golems might help them find the object they seek.

Gloaming Fey

Among the fey of dreams, mysteries, and wonder, the whimsical Trinket Lord has found favor. Members of the Gloaming Fey frequently seek him out for advice on the workings of certain magical creations and baubles. Even when these fey choose not to trade, they often visit the Hovel of Hansels to discuss the nature of the arcane mysteries of the world.

Recently, the Witch of Fates, a dark oracle of destiny, requested a treasure that Tuxil does not possess: the *bloodbond cauldron*. This cooking pot has been used for ages as an aid in weaving curses and casting rituals. It has passed among the gnarled hands of persecuted witches and hag covens. The Witch of Fates has promised the gnome many exotic items in trade for the cauldron, and he cannot resist her offer.

Tuxil believes the large, iron-red cauldron to be in the possession of the Misteye Coven, a group of hags that dwells deep within the Oblivion Bog, located in the Shadowfell. He has sent the call out to his warlocks to retrieve it for him. In addition, the Witch of Fates has offered to provide the services of a band of adventurers who might be able to retrieve the cauldron with Tuxil's guidance.

The Gnome Council

For many years, the Gnome Council has petitioned to the Trinket Lord, offering him a seat, and each time he has turned it down. He would rather dwell among his treasures in silence than sit and listen to the endless jabbering of his kin. Despite his feelings about the council, Tuxil remains extremely friendly with the Gnome Warrens, trading lore and knickknacks frequently. When he is not at home or visiting the Court of Stars, he is often found as an honored guest in the warrens.

Karl Stoneshine, the head of the Gnome Council, believes that the addition of the Trinket Lord to the council would bring safety and security to the warrens. Karl also thinks that the eladrin rulers would show more respect to the council if Tuxil were a member, because the eladrin hold him in high regard.

Not all members of the Gnome Council see the Trinket Lord as an ally. Some believe him to be a threat because he deals too often with creatures they consider to be the enemies of all gnomes. Lord Stoneshine has been unable to heal the rift on this issue within the council. Recently, he has become worried that an Unseelie threat might be influencing some of the gnomes on the council, trying to sour relations with the Trinket Lord permanently.

The Sea Lords

The treasures that lie at the bottoms of the great ocean chasms cannot be counted. Many of these items would never be seen again except for the efforts of the aquatic fey and merfolk treasure hunters. They search forgotten grottoes and dangerous depths, bringing ancient, mysterious artifacts to the Sea Lords in the Court of Coral. The aquatic fey send items they do not need to the Trinket Lord, hoping to trade for other relics they seek.

Currently, the archfey twins Elias and Siobhan are looking for the three remaining pieces of the *Leviathan's Maw*. That is the name given to a set of thirty scrimshawed teeth from a great beast of the depths. Carved on the teeth are the histories of the Sea Lords and lost rituals of oceans and rivers. Legends say that the *Leviathan's Maw* also has directions to a lost city that sunk beneath the waves long ago. One must possess all the pieces of the *Maw* to study the clues leading to the sunken city.

The Trinket Lord knows the whereabouts of the last three teeth and desperately wants to gather them and trade them to the twins. One is in the hands of a pirate lord in the Elemental Chaos, the second is part of a black dragon's hoard, and the last is being used as a holy symbol by a group of Far Realm cultists that worship a kraken. Tuxil is on the lookout for adventurers who are already dealing with these threats, hoping they will trade the scrimshawed treasures with him.

The Fomorian Kingdoms

Although the Trinket Lord remains neutral regarding many of the schemes concocted by the Court of Stars, he is one of the first to lend support against the threat of the fomorian rulers in their subterranean realms.

Tuxil will not return to the Feydark under any circumstances. The horrors he experienced in Inbharann were too great, and he bears many psychological scars. He will, however, aid warriors and adventurers who want to strike blows against the tyrants and to free the slaves that still dwell underground. Those who ask Tuxil for help against the fomorians are allowed to choose certain items from the hovel to take with them into the depths. The Trinket Lord requires nothing in trade, but the adventurers must bring him proof of their success against the fomorians, or they will suffer his curse. Before the heroes leave the hovel, they must agree to a pact that details how much time they have to complete their mission before the curse takes effect.

Fomorian spies have told their corrupt rulers about the tales of fantastic treasures hoarded by the Trinket Lord. In their jealousy and lust for material possessions, these lords have hired drow raiders to find the Hovel of Hansels, slay the gnome, and bring back as much wealth as possible. The fomorian rulers have also sent cyclops warriors and quickling assassins to end Tuxil's life. So far, he has been able to thwart these threats, but they have begun to increase in number and strength. Tuxil is looking for a way to stop the raids and send a message to the fomorians that he is not to be trifled with. As always, though, he will not journey below ground, so he seeks a group that is willing to help him.

About the Author

Karl Resch has been writing and creating characters his entire life. He is excited to have his first work published in *Dungeon*. When not writing for Wizards of the Coast, he enjoys updating his blog, *Artificer's Intuition*. He also enjoys running and playing Frisbee.

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A noble's parlor, a wizard's study, the scroll vault in a monastery, the Library of Korranberg in Eberron, Candlekeep in Faerûn, the Great Library of Greyhawk—like the real world, D&D worlds are filled with places that are filled with books. It's great fun to imagine the PCs riffling through scrolls among the dusty stacks or discovering a treasure trove of lore in the dungeon . . . but then what? As a DM, what do you fill those bookcases with?

It can be tough to come up with titles for such works on the spur of the moment, let alone their contents and authors. And creating the material in advance means putting a lot of work into something the characters might not experience.

That's where this article comes in. Here are some ready-made ideas for fantastic books, as well as advice on using works of great (or not so great) literature to add to the flavor of your campaign.

Bestiaries

Bestiaries gained popularity in our real world during medieval times, but an example of the form existed as early as the second century AD: the *Physiologus*. Many such works incorporated elements of story and moral teachings in addition to describing the creatures. The bestiaries' authors ascribed ethical and emotional attributes to the creatures such that the animals and mythical beings became symbolic shorthand. Often, bestiaries perpetuated falsehoods about the creatures, such as the "fact" that pelicans feed their young blood from their breasts.

The bestiaries in your campaign might be just as "fanciful" as those of the real world, or they might relate facts that your players can rely upon and use. If you want to use a D&D monster in a unique way or present some particular truth about your campaign (vampires can't cross running water, basilisks are born of snake eggs warmed by cockerels, or a medusa can be turned to stone by seeing her own reflection), a bestiary can be a great way to accomplish that.

Annax's Armorial

Annax's Armorial, also called *The Heraldry of Heaven*, is a large, leather-bound volume written and beautifully illustrated by the meticulous hand of Annax, a wizard who converted to worship of Ioun and became a priest of high status. It records the name, rank, allegiance, appearance, mission, and personality of 222 angels and 111 devils, all purportedly granted in visions to Annax. The author spends little space on these features besides a summary for each, and instead devotes most of each left-hand page to a picture of the immortal's coat of arms and heraldic badges. The meaning of each element is then described in great detail on the following right-hand page, unless the feature already lies among those general heraldic elements described in the long foreword of the book. While the accuracy of this information has not been determined, many have attempted to steal *Annax's Armorial* because it is thought to harbor the true names of the immortals described within,

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which are said to give any conjurer of an immortal absolute power over it. The names are believed to be not in text itself, but coded in the heraldry.

Folio of the Formless

Somewhat befitting its title, the *Folio of the Formless* is a large leather binder containing looseleaf notes in script that at first glance appears to have been made by several different hands. The sketches on the many broad sheets of parchment, however, reveal the consistent style of a single artist and author. By sorting through the many pages, one can glean a rough outline of the story of this mysterious author. Apparently he or she used a *hat of disguise* and other similar magic to infiltrate the small societies of various types of shapechangers in order to record and ultimately reveal their secrets. When read in order, the notes reveal an increasing paranoia on the part of the author and an inability to trust his or her own eyes, particularly after having infiltrated a covey of doppelgangers. Blood spatters what should be the final page of the *Folio of the Formless*, leaving the reader to wonder about the fate of the author and how the book found its way into circulation.

BOOKS AS TREASURE

A picture might be worth a thousand words, but just how much is a thousand words worth?

The simple answer is that you can decide whatever value you like for books as treasure. Of course, different people are likely to value a book differently, depending on their background and inclination. An average person likely has no interest in buying a book that a collector or someone more knowledgeable might pay hundreds of gold pieces for. On the other hand, in a world where writing and printing are less common than today, more people place value on the written word just on principle, and certainly any illuminated manuscript is likely to be viewed by most people as a work of great effort and art.

Legends and Lore

In a world of magic, myths are history. The stories we might call fairy tales and legends could describe very real events.

The Jotun Edda

The Jotun Edda tells the story of the Dawn War from the point of view of giantkind. This poem in the Giant tongue is inscribed in fine Davek script around the curves of seven 5-foot-long, 5-inch-wide cylinders of black stone, the stone giant equivalent of scrolls. An unknown carver cleverly crafted each pillar so that the poem could be read around its diameter in successive vertical lines that use the letters of the horizontal words for new verses. *The Jotun Edda* supposedly describes many evil deeds performed by the immortals that the gods hid from mortal memory. These secrets of the gods might reveal where gods and primordials fell, and therefore where potent weapons and armor might lie forgotten.

Rise and Fall of the Turathi

Lady Dania Von Harken, a human writing in the decade before the calamitous fall of Bael Turath, crafted *Rise and Fall of the Turathi* as an impassioned plea to her compatriots. A member of the elite herself, she describes the history of the Turathi Empire from its earliest days to its sorry state during her lifetime. She spends most of the book describing Bael Turath in her era: a nation ruled by dissolute aristocrats and bloated with conquest, unsteady as it stands on the backs of its slaves and subjugated enemies. Riot spreads like a disease among the lower classes, the wealthy increasingly retreat into isolation and debauchery, intrigue and divisive coups threaten the ruling families, and whispers of demonic incursion spread. All this occurs as the long-simmering conflict with Arkhosia seems to finally be coming to a boil. Lady Von Harken clearly believes the empire to be poised on the brink of destruction.

The goal of the book is not, however, to save Bael Turath and turn the empire from its path, but instead to entreat the reader to hasten its end. According to Lady Von Harken, to end the empire "would be a mercy granted the world."

Ever since the original copy was discovered, scholars have argued about its authenticity, with many asserting it to be a piece of Arkhosian propaganda. Regardless, the manuscript offers many accurate details about Bael Turath before its fall, which treasure hunters have oftentimes found useful.

Literature

Even in a world where magic is real, people enjoy fiction. The drive to create and tell stories and to revel in the written word drives people of all stripes to record their ideas in poetry, plays, novels, and other forms of written expression.

The Versifier at Work

The real name of the elf author known as the Versifier was Adriel Eisryn, but the moniker she was given by her human patron, King Theymos the Third, stuck. The Versifier's plays are regularly performed on stages two hundred years after her death, and original copies of her plays and poems fetch high prices among cultured collectors. This untitled work, unlike her finished and titled works, demonstrates the Versifier's creative process. Through the scratched-out lines, notes in the margins, and appended scraps of

paper, the reader can see a true masterpiece taking shape.

The story in this work is a tragedy that features the intrigues of three noble families in the empire of Arkhosia and a love triangle involving one character from each family. As the only one of the Versifier's works to feature dragonborn as lead characters and the only one to reveal how she approaches her craft, it would be virtually priceless to the right buyer, and any performance would be sure to find success.

Infernal Curiosa

Furtive monks and disreputable booksellers have been making copies of the thin illuminated volume known as the *Infernal Curiosa* for generations. Supposedly originally penned by an imp in the Nine Hells, it describes in lurid detail the temptations and the traps used to ensnare various mortal souls. The Proud King, the Greedy Merchant, the Lustful Sailor, and other similar archetypal characters experience the heights of gratification before their souls are inevitably snatched away.

Though this book might be seen as a series of morality lessons, the fiendish author takes such immense pleasure in describing the temptations that consume the characters that the fate of their immortal souls seems an afterthought. Believed to inspire exactly the wanton behavior it would seem to warn against, the *Infernal Curiosa* is taboo in polite company and outright illegal in many lands.

Music

Music courses through every culture but the most alien and evil ones. Music survives and thrives even without being written down, but some works are so complex that notes must be put to page. Scholars collect folk songs to preserve them, bards compose and note their own tunes, and priests record holy music in hymnals. Some music is, quite literally, magical.

Heward's Mistake

Heward's name appears down through history in connection with music and instruments as well as odd magic items. Tales of Heward suggest that he was both mortal and divine. Although none can now be certain, it is generally assumed by scholars that Heward was a mortal elevated to the role of exarch in service to some deity, likely Ioun. *Heward's Mistake* is a symphony that Heward composed using his fabled *Mystical Organ*. This enormous pipe organ supposedly had at least a dozen keyboards and was large enough to fill a cathedral. The symphony, written for the many instruments the *Mystical Organ* could replicate, has been fully performed three times throughout history, and each performance caused disaster. Although it was supposedly the most sublime piece of music ever heard when played upon the *Mystical Organ*, legend has it that the musicians of the orchestras that played it were driven mad. Nevertheless, some desperately seek true copies of *Heward's Mistake* because of its rumored ability to grant the conductor of the piece a god's control over all the landscape where the music can be heard. The temptation and the resultant disaster caused by the symphony earned the work its name.

Gilgallan's Songbook

The small leather-bound volume titled *Gilgallan's Songbook* is the work of a gnome bard who traveled throughout elf, eladrin, and gnome settlements collecting folk songs. After acquiring them, Gilgallan altered the verses of the songs that were traditional to those areas. The changes embody coded messages that can be understood only in the context of the place where the normal versions of the lyrics originated. Gilgallan's words identify certain landmarks and reveal the secrets necessary to find and use various crossings to the Feywild. Any who hope to use the book to make a crossing must hear the songs of the inhabitants of the area, which is made more difficult by the fact that some of the folk songs are from the Feywild and contain methods for return crossings.

Maps

The earliest known maps in the real world show not the landscape but the stars. Cave paintings depict the positions of bright stars such as Altair, Deneb, and Vega. When you think about it, it makes perfect sense that humanity would depict the heavens before mapping the earth. Cartography proved difficult and unreliable until the twentieth century, and the purpose of a map of the landscape is to navigate the land as you move. That's hard to do when the map is stuck at home on a cavern wall.

Of course, maps today come in all forms: treasure maps, architectural drawings, tourist pamphlets, property plats, navigational charts, and so on. Any such maps might exist in a D&D world.

Lanthorn of Leng

The legendary *Lanthorn of Leng* is a beautiful cylindrical contraption of brass and glass roughly the size of a firkin (a small cask). Five shutters of different sizes can be opened in its sides, each opening revealing a magnifying lens of curved clear glass and allowing light to burst forth from the lanthorn when it is lit. Within the lanthorn's interior are seven successively smaller cylinders of glass, each set within the last, until at the center is a plate upon which various elements can be burned. These interior lenses are painted with lines of various colors through which light can pass and gain their hues. By twisting these lenses in the proper manner and opening the appropriate shutter or shutters, the *Lanthorn of Leng* reveals forbidden maps of the Labyrinth City of Leng and many other territories. Using different colored light sources causes some lines to vanish in the projected images and thus reveals new maps. The exact number

THESE BOOKS ARE REAL . . .

When creating books for your game use the world around you as inspiration. Not only can your own bookshelf at home or the library give you ideas, you can plunder the wonders of the internet. Below are the results of a quick search for interesting real-world examples of the written word.

Klencke Atlas: This book is taller than many people and takes six to lift it. A book fit for giants, it was designed to hold maps that would be removed and attached to a wall.

World's Largest Book: The so-called worlds' largest book is engraved in huge stone tablets set in the sides of 729 buildings called stupas, which stand outside the brilliantly gilded Kuthodaw Pagoda in Burma.

Along the River During the Qingming Festival: This landscape painting is presented on a scroll less than a foot wide but over 17 feet long. Over the centuries since its creation, it has been copied several times due to its great fame and popularity.

Yongle Dadain: This encyclopedia commissioned by a Chinese emperor took two thousand scholars five years to complete. It had 11,095 volumes, and, incredibly, three copies were made.

. . . AND THESE COULD BE!

When making up books for your game, consider the fictional works other people have made up. Below are a few you might recognize. You can use these fake treatises as inspiration or adopt them whole cloth into your campaign.

The Mimir: The Planescape setting adapted the idea of the figure of Mimir from Norse mythology. Instead of the severed heads of storytellers carried by Odin, mimirs were magic items that could record and replay what they heard. In the *Planescape: Torment* computer game this idea appeared in the form of the character named Morte. In the Planescape line of roleplaying products, the concept came to life in the odd but delightful *A Player's Primer to the Outlands*. That book and an accompanying CD of the recorded stories and interactions of owners of the mimir together formed a guide to various planes of existence and their inhabitants.

Necronomicon: Although many books have borne this title, none can claim to be the real book that inspired the writings of H. P. Lovecraft. Instead, the stories written by Lovecraft and his many imitators have so often referenced the *Necronomicon* that it seems like it might be real. Supposedly, the *Necronomicon* contains information about the Old Ones and how to summon these alien and terrible beings.

Rules of Acquisition: "Anything worth doing is worth doing for money." "You can't free a fish from water." "A wealthy man can afford anything except a conscience."

If you watched *Star Trek Deep Space Nine*, you'll recall that Quark and other Ferengi often refer to the *Rules of Acquisition*, a set of aphorisms that seem to be equal parts religion and law in the hyper-capitalistic Ferengi culture. The often ironic (and sometimes insightful) maxims of the *Rules* can be found online, but you could make a Ferengi happy and buy a copy of *The Ferengi Rules of Acquisition* from your local bookshop or an online retailer.

Tobin's Spirit Guide: If you're familiar with the Ghostbusters franchise, this title should ring a bell. Frequently referenced by the Ghostbusters in the movies, cartoon, comics, and electronic games, many have wondered if this catalog of spirits is real. Unfortunately, it's not. However, Wizards of the Coast's Kim Mohan did write a book by that name for the Ghostbusters International roleplaying game by West End Games..

of maps revealed by the lanthorn and what they show is a secret lost to time, but rumor persists that there exists a code book that indicates the cylinder placement, shutter, and light source for each location depicted in it.

Roll of Tears

An enormous map in the form of a scroll, the *Roll of Tears* can be unfurled along its great length to reveal details about the Valley of Tears. This broad and sandy plain between two cliffs served as the final resting place for citizens of an empire now known only as the Kingdom of Dust, and the site of the tomb of its last pharaoh, the legendary Ramman-Khul. The leader's name has yet to fade from the memory of civilization because of his savage cruelty and because of how far his soldiers roamed in search of slaves. Some say half the population of the world once labored under his rule. While that statement is surely an exaggeration, another story—that a million slaves died in the construction of his necropolis—is met with more credence. The *Roll of Tears* is an architectural map of the whole valley, showing the locations of hundreds of tombs and often including small maps and details about the traps therein. In the intervening centuries, sand has buried the floor of the Valley of Tears, and few know its whereabouts. Equipped with the *Roll of Tears*, however, one might become very rich—assuming that one is also equipped with a lot of shovels.

Creating Books with Hooks

The books described at length in this article are all examples of how you can create a full backstory around a book you want the characters to engage with. The idea is to build in a hook—something that tips off the players to how important that piece of

written matter is. For a book with a detailed history, the hook is a natural outgrowth of that story.

A hook doesn't need to be that complicated, though. Starting with the story of your campaign as a backdrop, you can use books as both prizes and plot devices. Here are a few "books with hooks" that can turn an ordinary volume into one of extraordinary significance.

- A kingdom's tax records with the dates and routes of tax collectors
- A business's profit books, which list payouts for "services rendered" on dates just after murders of some prominent citizens
- A lexicon of the Giant language with tips about interacting with orcs and different orc dialects
- A guide to corporeal undead made of undead; the book moans and whispers as its pages are turned
- The shipping records of a prominent merchant company that reveal shipments of contraband, such as slaves
- The ledgers of a metalsmith, which reveal the recent sale of a large number of weapons and armor to a contingent of diplomats new to the city
- A contract between an efreet and another individual, promising aid on three occasions if the contract holder merely says the efreet's name; one more task remains (two having been marked as used), but there are scorch marks on the document as well
- A genealogy of a noble family with a brilliantly illustrated family tree that mentions one of the character's relatives among the branches
- A dwarven text describing the principles involved in creating secure burial and treasure vaults

About the Author

Matt Sernett is a writer and game designer for Wizards of the Coast who has worked on both Dungeons & Dragons® and Magic: The Gathering®. Recent credits include *Halls of Undermountain*™, *Neverwinter*™ *Campaign Guide*, and *Scars of Mirrodin*™. When he's not making monsters or building worlds, he's watching bad fantasy movies you don't realize exist and shouldn't bother to learn about. You can follow him on Twitter, where he's @Sernett.

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